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# THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY

## EDITORIAL

In chaos there is never any problem of authority. It is only when men try to bring order out of chaos and to control or systematize their environment that the problem becomes acute—"By what authority do you say that?" or "On whose authority do you do this?" For this reason constitutional and political issues center in this problem of authority, and it inevitably lies at the heart of the present international dilemma as the peoples of this planet through the United Nations seek to resolve their differences without reverting to the primitive jungle or to primeval chaos.

However, it also concerns the Church. Historically it is no accident that forms of political authority have usually walked hand in hand with their ecclesiastical counterparts, and when James I at the Hampton Court Conference exclaimed "No bishop, no King!" he was simply giving expression to what appeared in 1603 to be a self-evident fact. Whether or not we agree that the forms of power-structure in Church and State must inevitably influence each other—and we *could* find liberal Roman Catholics and presumably authoritarian Quakers enough to suggest that this is not an infallible rule—it is certainly clear that the problem of authority, its nature and its form, exists within the Church as well as within civil society. The subject that the World Council of Churches has chosen for its next Assembly—"Christ, the Light of the World"—shows that the Churches are apparently all agreed that authority in the Church centers in "the Lordship of Jesus Christ," but it is equally clear from present church practice that there is little agreement on how this is to be interpreted within the institutional forms and structures of the Church.

But the problem has a wider application. If Peter Taylor Forsyth was right when he said that "our idea of authority lies so near the heart of life that it colours our whole circulation," it will influence not only the kind of politics we support or church that we join, but it will carry implications for what we think about the Bible, educa-



tion, and even our understanding of 'knowledge' itself. It will be found to be not only at the heart of the international problem and the ecumenical problem, but also in the center of discussions on hermeneutics, pedagogy, and even of epistemology. [Which is to remind our alumni that this is only a more academic and highfalutin' way of saying precisely what was said in the previous sentence!]

Most of the papers included in this issue raise the problem of authority in one form or another. They are written from the point of view of the individual authors—whatever the Student body chooses to think, there is no 'party line'!—and they are offered less in the expectation that they will solve the problems of authority once and for all, than in the hope that through them the reader may be stimulated to raise the questions again and to find what is for him (or her) satisfying answers. So Dr. Wilhelm Wuellner discusses the nature of authority as it appears in the Bible, Dr. Helen Khoobyar addresses herself to the problem as it has appeared recently in Religious Education, Dr. John Arapura (whom we welcome as a Visiting Professor within the department of Indian Studies) considers it from the standpoint of a philosopher, and Dr. William Bradley writes on "The Authority of Jesus Christ." It gives us particular pleasure to include an article by Dr. Moses Bailey, who retires this year from his post as Nettleton Professor of Old Testament, but who we are grateful to know will be teaching for a further year on the campus. No man is more beloved by us all. [We also extend our love and good wishes in retirement to Professor Ruth Conant and to Elwood and Augusta Street who lay down their official duties with us this year.]

Within the field of recent experiment we include a brief report

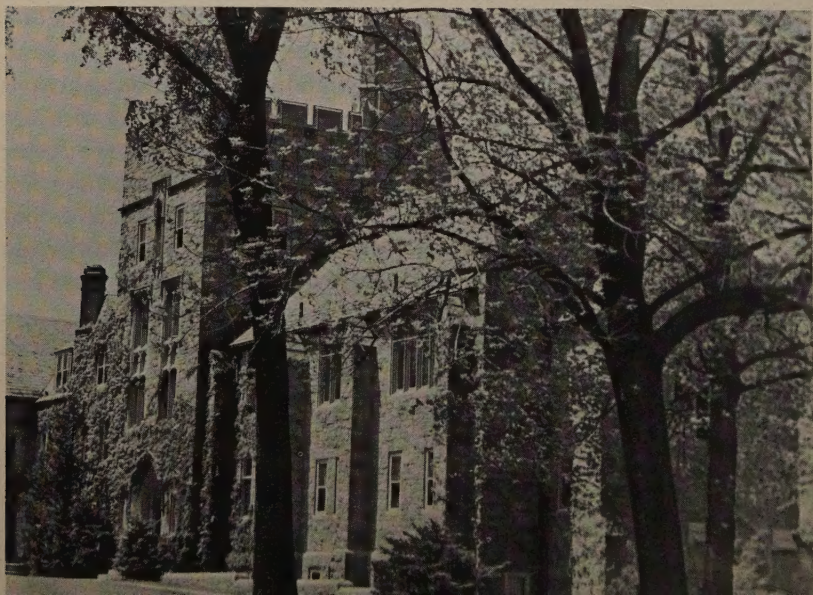


by Dr. Peter Berger on what happened when a sociologist was let loose in a course where theological students were required to preach on social issues!

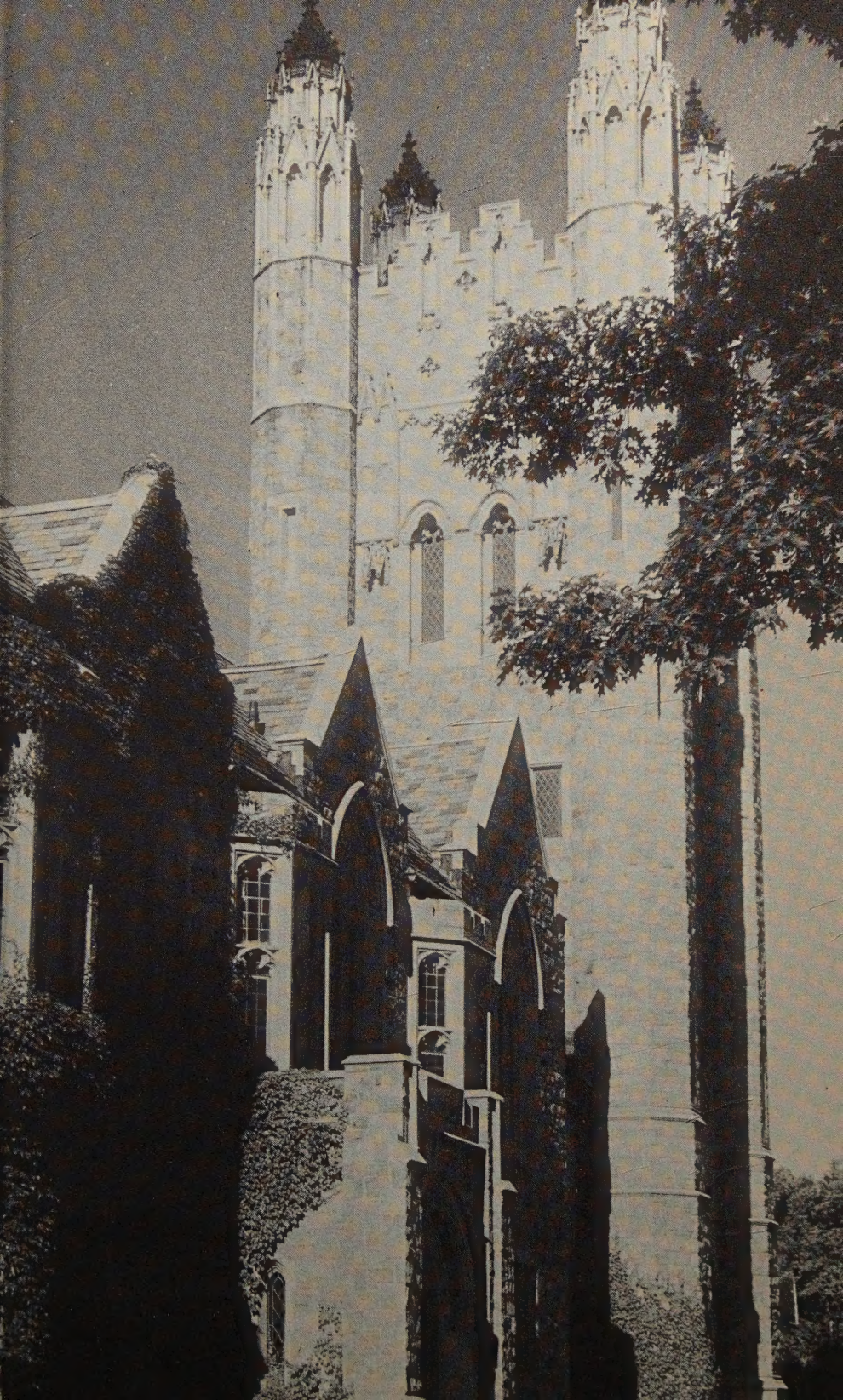
Because the 50th anniversary of our distinguished sister *The Muslim World* fell at the end of 1960, we are devoting the next issue of the *Quarterly* to singing its praises and to articles that are concerned with its particular interests. We hope to include the lectures delivered on campus by Dr. Kenneth Cragg (formerly Professor of Arabic and Islamics) inaugurating the Alexander Purdy Lectureship. With the agreement of Dr. Da'ud Rahbar we are also holding over his inaugural lecture until that issue, because it seemed more appropriate that it should appear in an issue that concentrated within his field of special interest.

The contributions of two distinguished visitors appear in this issue—papers delivered on the H.S.F. campus. Frederick Neumann gave us an intriguing study of the Book of Ecclesiastes, and we are also extremely grateful to have Professor Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's appreciation of the new edition of Calvin's *Institutes*, translated by Dr. Ford Lewis Battles. This paper by Dr. Rosenstock-Huessy was given earlier this year at the time of the publication of Dr. Battles's work by the Westminster Press. The completion of this notable translation is a matter of real congratulation to the translator and all concerned, and Hartford Seminary Foundation basks in the reflected glory!

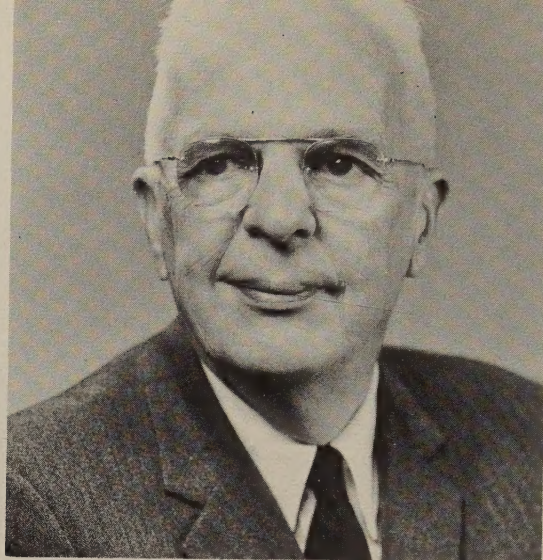
R. S. P.











Moses Bailey



# METAPHORS AND THEOLOGY

## Dr. Moses Bailey

Moses Bailey, Nettleton Professor of Old Testament, has been a member of the Hartford faculty since 1932 and is now its beloved senior member.

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*"Man for the most part conceives of what is remote, unknown, or difficult to understand in terms of what is near, well known, and self-evident."*<sup>1</sup>

The study of religion is like the consideration of a geometrical figure which somehow, in one portion, disappears into an unknown dimension in which it cannot be traced. For religion, by all its practitioners, involves something done, something said, and an inner motion of fear, love, hope, urgency that inspires the words and deeds. The camera may record what is done. The words of liturgy and explanation may be permanently recorded. But the psychological needs and demands which underlie the deeds and words escape our analysis. The most worthy saints insist that their conduct inadequately expresses the ideal which possesses them. The mystics say that their vision is truly ineffable. The student is left to infer the reality of the inner motion, that unknown dimension of faith, though he must, with the saint and the mystic, be continually critical of the correctness of the conduct and explanations which have become attached to it. The beginner in algebra quickly learns to write 'a<sup>4</sup>,' though the concept of a four-dimensional box is really beyond imagining. The religious man speaks of right conduct and right belief and God: God, he finds, wholly necessary to his thought, yet as unthinkable in words as that fourth power in algebra.

<sup>1</sup>Ernst Topitsch, in *Myth and Mythmaking* ed. by Henry A. Murray, George Braziller, New York, 1960, p. 157.

We assume the sincerity of the saints and the mystics who find their good character and good words inadequate to express their inner experience. Nevertheless, we see in the lives of the true saints, even when they appear to us to have acted contrary to reason, by espousing wrong causes, a devotion to an unseen ideal which invites us, too, to seek an ideal. And the celestial words of the worshiper, though in themselves unreal, become poetry of a real, but unexplored dimension.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, there early developed a strong feeling for the important relation of words to the expression of faith. The Hebrews, unlike some of their neighbors, may not have produced word-lists for learned translators, but they wrote balanced parallels of syntax, synonyms and metaphors. In the Latter Prophets and in the Psalms a vocabulary of ethics and of theology becomes as vigorous as it is revolutionary. So Amos equates *rebelliousness* with *cruelty*; *up-setting good custom* with *bribe-taking*; *national adultery* with *disorderly conduct* in the community; in general, *sin* with *destruction*. Poetic parallelism and clear logic merge in Hebrew style.

Old Testament poetry, especially in the Psalms, opens the eyes of the mind to an invisible realm. Poetry is essentially metaphorical, open-ended. Unlike exposition, it stretches the mind toward ideas beyond the prosaic meanings of words. Hebrew poetry is somewhat unique in that its parallel clauses often present two parallel metaphors, unlike, if we offer a prose exegesis, but doubly effective as pointers toward some truth-beyond-words at which the poet is aiming.

For thou hast no delight in sacrifice;  
were I to give a burnt offering, thou  
wouldest not be pleased.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a  
broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God,  
thou wilt not despise.

So Ps. 51:16 f., seemingly contradicting itself, presents its idea the more vigorously.

Incline thy ear to me,  
Rescue me speedily!

Be thou a rock of refuge for me,  
A strong fortress to save me!

So Ps. 31:2 seeks safety through warrior-champion and rock-hewn fortress; both point to the man's salvation, leaving a pleasantly blurred picture of the means of its coming.

The metaphors by which the Psalms refer to deity are so numer-



ous and so varied that the mind is left with no crude impression that God actually is a king, or a bull, or a drink of cool water. All this is unthinkable. Rather, each picture opens the mind's eye toward a larger mystery. The following list is only partial, and the translation is not in every case conventional: Military metaphors refer to God as:

Shield, Refuge, Fortress, Deliverer, Support, Armourer, Professor-at-War-College, Avenger, Strength, Champion.

In government, he is

Judge, King, Support of the King, King of the Gentiles, Eternal King, Man of Zion.

In nature, he is

Dweller in the Sky, Glory, Cliff, Rock, Highest, the Name, Shepherd.

More intimately, he is

The One who lifts my head, the Light, the Light of Revelation, Helper, My (sacramental) Cup, Praised One, One who establishes my feet, Redeemer, My Integrity, One keeping my feet from evil, My Savior, My Providential Portion.

In all these metaphors God is Reality, no abstraction; yet in their wide range and sensuous contradictions the Reality is never demoted to god. The superficial inadequacies of the metaphors are so obvious that they are ignored by the mind: shepherds are usually ignorant, unwashed, but they protect sheep; castles are often ugly, inaccessible, but they house a community; kings are not always saints, but they govern; fathers are men, but they love their children; potters get dirty, but they are clever; voices are of all sorts, but they communicate; an oasis is restricted and impoverished, but it gives life; bridegrooms are men, but they are in love.

The Psalms speak of Light, the Light of Day, the Light of Salvation; we understand the poetry without any prosaic commentary. The Fourth Gospel, summarizing the inner truth of which the resurrection story is a materialized narrative (a "myth," in the presently popularized discussion), says that "the light shines in the dark, but the dark does not put it out." The triumph of Life and Light over Darkness and Death demands a revision of our thought about reality. The Johannine Gospel continually turns the mind toward the inner reality of faith. Readers of the Gospel have sometimes missed the profound metaphors. The Journal of George Fox, perhaps because it is so much longer, uses an even greater variety

of metaphors with repeated emphasis upon the inwardly experienced character of light. From these vivid pictures of the inner world, how much systematic interpretation is legitimate? What, specifically, is the relation of *conscience* to *Inner Light*?

In the church, theological metaphors of the Bible tended to become symbols. The shepherd of poetry became the Good Shepherd, the Christ. Pictorial art found satisfaction in symbolic representations of kings, shepherds, vines, fishes, doors. Such pictures were the vocabulary of faith. Sometimes beautiful, occasionally with universal rather than sectarian appeal (compare E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman World* 1953-58), they were increasingly formalized, each thing a symbol of life, death, salvation, faith.

Seventeenth century England, again became Hebraically minded because of printed English translation of the Bible. Not a little of the ancient spirit of Psalms and the Fourth Gospel reappeared. Biblical metaphors were borrowed, and new metaphors were discovered. With this manner of speech, George Fox's Journal is replete. The reader, familiar with the Bible, and aware that some of the biblical sayings had in Mediterranean and European culture become frozen into symbols and signs, inquires whether George Fox, the early Quaker, used the old expressions with fixed theological connotation or in free poetic imagery.

For the inner motives of faith he used, with varying frequency, many figures of speech. Of these, Christ, Light, Seed, and Teacher are especially common. Christ, of course, he uses as a proper noun, though the other words appear both as common nouns and, occasionally, as proper nouns. In very many of the places where these expressions are used there is outspoken opposition to the current belief that there is external authority for Christian faith which should be accepted as final. Fox dissented: the inner authority is final, he said, though he constantly tried to show that this inner authority conformed to the Bible. His heresy was one of emphasis. Almost as frequent as the references to the *Light-within*, the expression borrowed from the Fourth Gospel, are words about the *Seed of God*, another Gospel idea which Fox extends beyond its clear biblical intent.

"the Seed of God, in man and in me"

"Seed of God lying thick in the ground."



"choke the Seed of faith"

"So must the fallow ground of their heart be plowed up before they bear seed to God."

"the blessed Seed and me in it"

"the Seed Christ which was before the devil was"

"and the Lord's plants finely grew and were established on Christ the rock and foundation"

"declaring the eternal word of life and preaching the everlasting Seed of life."

"the elect seed of God called Quakers"

"his Seed reached from sea to sea."

"as far as truth had spread in the north there was rain enough and pleasant showers."

"the seed which is first and last, the beginning and the ending, the top and the cornerstone, which is my love in which I rest."

"I felt the Seed of God to sparkle about me like innumerable sparks of fire."

"he said that I said the seed was God . . . But I said I did not say so."

"Jesus Christ's teaching and ordering fresh and green"

"be born again in the immortal Seed"

"And the Seed, Christ, was set over all."

"in the innocent seed of God"

G.F. went to Ireland "to visit the Seed of God in that nation"

G.F. describing his marriage to Margaret Fell: "the Lord joining us together in the honorable marriage in the everlasting covenant and the immortal Seed of life."

"my love in the everlasting Seed by which you will have wisdom"

The *Teacher-within* also seems a Gospel concept considerably expanded:

"their teacher was within them"

"the anointing to teach them"

"I directed them to their teacher Christ Jesus."

"the grace of God that would teach them and bring their salvation."

"to the spirit and grace of God in themselves and to the light of Jesus in their own hearts, that they might come to know Christ their free teacher."

"the Spirit and teacher within them."

"Your teacher is within you."

"to the Lord Jesus Christ, their rock and foundation, teacher and saviour"

"the light . . . that would be his teacher . . . if he minded it."

"Christ their free teacher"

"Friends were settled upon the foundation, Christ Jesus, and under his free teaching."

"Christ their foundation, their rock and their teacher"  
 "their teacher, the grace of God"  
 "the grace of God . . . teaches us then and now"  
 "the wisdom of God will teach you."

Less frequent is the divine *principle*:

"the perfect principle of God in every one"  
 "the principle of Truth"  
 "feel the principle of God"  
 "the principle of God in thee"  
 "the principle of God within"  
 "the inward principle"

Still less does Fox use *conscience*. Was the word for his time, as for ours, a little too common and too colorless? But he does say:

"To the light in all your consciences I do speak, which Christ  
 Jesus doth enlighten you withal."  
 "and speakest against thy conscience and reason."  
 "that of God in their consciences and the light of Christ Jesus  
 in them"

Other ways of describing the inner world Fox had:

"I heard a voice"  
 "this I knew experimentally"  
 "this inward life did spring up in me"  
 "there seemed to be two pleading within me"<sup>2</sup>  
 "the pure love of God was upon me"  
 "the voice crying in the wilderness in their hearts"  
 "truth and light within them"  
 "glory and life shined over all and with it I was crowned"  
 "the anointing which is in you to be taught by it"  
 "light and spirit of God in himself"  
 "the Spirit of God in themselves"  
 the word of the Lord was "hammer and a fire amongst them"  
 "spirit of discerning" caused them to tremble  
 "the eternal refreshings refreshed me" G.F. said, as he returned  
 to consciousness after being beaten and left soaking in the mud.  
 "to the light in you I speak"  
 "Christ the second covenant"  
 "to be nourished up to eternal life from one fountain from  
 whence life comes"  
 "the witness of God in them"  
 "the spirit of Christ who enlighteneth everyone that cometh  
 into the world"  
 "the life the Scriptures were given forth from"  
 "answering that of God in them all"

<sup>2</sup>cf. the *good and evil formation*, so often mentioned in Judaism.



“walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in every one”

“James Naylor . . . was dark and much out”

“they were turned from the darkness to the light and to Jesus Christ.”

“that by him they might come up into the beginning and be reconciled to God.”

“And he said the Scriptures were above the spirit . . . and were the word of God.” (this G.F. said in controversy)

“feel the physician of value”

“the spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable”

“And wicked men were enlightened by this light, else how could they hate it?”

“and the witness started up in him”

Monthly meetings were established . . . “to take care of God’s glory”

“the inward cross”

From such-like passages, some phrases of which are many times repeated, we conclude that Fox’s faith was strongly centered in the living Christ, to whom he referred in many different ways; and that the Christ was a vital inner experience, known to all, though denied by some. Outward conduct and the words used of faith sprang from this inner fountain, grew from this inward planting, were the visible consequence of the Light Within. Specifically, he spoke of Deity neither in vast abstraction nor in creedal cliché, but with metaphor, as the ancient Hebrews had done. So we read what God was like. The precise words about religion interested Fox as little as they did the ancient Psalmists: in this respect, his thought was quite Hebraic. As Fox disapproved of ordaining ministers and of calling steeple-houses churches, so he would have ordained no words for theological usage. Occasionally, in controversy, Fox seemed on the point of theological definition, as when he argued with “one of New England’s magistrates” who “said that I said the seed was God . . . But I said I did not say so; I said he took not upon him the nature of angels but the seed.” Though the manner of such controversy may be foreign to us, we recognize that the Quaker was trying to avoid too strong an assertion of divine immanence.

Fox spoke three hundred years ago. He said of his faith, “This I learned experimentally.” “For I saw in that Light and Spirit which was before Scripture was given forth, and which led the holy men

of God to give them forth, that all must come to that Spirit, if they would find God, or Christ, or the Scriptures aright, which they that led them forth were led and taught by." Like the Psalmists and the author of the Fourth Gospel Fox called these things to our attention through poetic metaphor. Systematic theology is characteristic of neither Fox nor the Scriptures.

In the years since Fox's death the Quakers have much used the metaphor of the Light. The Light Within, or the Inner Light are presently favored phrases among the Friends. The usage invites comment: Are the words God and Inner Light synonymous? Is the Light to be identified with conscience? Is there no clear dividing line between the human and the divine? Fox himself seems to have had little interest in such questions; when pressed for theological explanation of his view he wrote one of his dullest letters,<sup>3</sup> which in effect says that he believed what was conventionally believed by his fellow Christians. If Fox were reincarnated in some other generation we may suppose that he would say again that he believed the conventional beliefs of that age, writing a businesslike and quite unimportant document to that effect. In these matters he was neither orthodox nor heretical, only uninterested: of course, too, uninteresting.

The attempt to express vital religious experience through poetic figures of speech remains our inadequate best. The most vital part of our faith, its inwardness, is like that part of an hypothetical figure in geometry which slips off into an unknown dimension. High school pencils will still scrub the symbol for the fourth power of  $a$ ; and uncomprehending preachers will intone unpoetic words about God.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to the Governor of the Barbadoes.







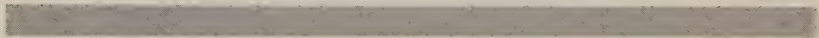
Wilhelm Wuellner



# NORMS OF AUTHORITY IN BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

Dr. Wilhelm Wuellner

Wilhelm Wuellner, Associate Professor of New Testament, came to the Hartford faculty this year from Grinnell College to which he had gone upon completion of his doctoral work at the University of Chicago in 1958.



Authority is an extremely controversial issue. This is due partly to the complexity of the historical and ideological factors involved, partly to the bias and presuppositions of the interpreter, or of those who practice or suffer authority. Changing times and cultural conditions add to the difficulty of assessing objectively what constitutes authority.

Like other universal religions Christianity voices the claim that God's absolute authority is universally valid; authority is truth. This claim is maintained concretely in and by "the Body of Christ" present within the organized churches of empirical Christianity of yesterday and today. The dividedness of the Churches, which are only partially united or even cooperating, aggravates the question: who speaks for God? With whom is authority? The question is also reflected in the present struggles over the means of affirming and concretely applying universal justice through the UNO, and over the authority of federal courts in local disputes over racial relations.

How did the earliest Christians establish for themselves norms of authority? How did they set about defining for themselves and others what authority was and how it was to be exercised? How did the culture before and beside Christianity think of, or acknowledge something, or someone, as authority?

## AUTHORITY IN GREEK AND ROMAN SOCIETY

The Greek language does not even have a technical term for what the Romans called *auctoritas*, from which we derived our word "authority." It denotes a quality which someone, or something, has due to innate powers or social qualities or graces. Words of such seemingly disparate meaning as augment, augur, august, author, auxiliary, all have this in common with the concept "authority" that they refer to some quality emanating from within someone or something that makes observers or participants marvel, respond, obey.

This *auctoritas* is said to differ from *potestas* (cf. English "potentate") and *imperium* (cf. English "imperial") as sheer *dynamis* or power in that the latter two terms designate a manifestation of authority through external means, while *auctoritas* rests on a voluntary submission, based on some inner compulsion or conviction brought about by the encounter with the person or thing that is, or has, authority.

Greeks and Romans carefully distinguished, at least theoretically, between institutional power or authority of organized religion and its various cultural traditions, and the dynamic, spontaneous, charismatic authority of the gifted individual. In theory one distinguished between the two; in theory one attributed to both kinds of authority equal value. In practice, however, as history proves, one kind of authority was frequently played out against the other. The struggle between Athenian demagogues and democracy of the 5th century B.C. is as illuminating for our (historical) appraisal of the changing value scale of who or what became considered as constitutive of authority, as is the story of the Roman Republic and the rise of the Caesars.

For the subsequent evaluation of norms of authority in the New Testament the preceding presentation yields two points of interest. On the one hand, we see already established clearly defined social norms of authority: the emperor, the head of a family, the old over the young, man over woman, priest over laity, and many other personal representations that differ in the various cultural spheres even within a rather close realm of the Graeco-Roman culture. We also find social institutions in place of power or authority: the senate, the various orders of religious hierarchy, and the like. On the



other hand, we see attempts made on the side of the authority agent, as well as on the side of those who acknowledge authority, to justify their authority through legal documentation in written, codified form. Authority claims a right. Not only is truth synonymous with authority, but so also are power and right. Wherever these exist in civilized life, the claims based upon them are sooner or later forced to authenticate themselves by means other than brute force or superstition. The most popular form of authentication is the sealed, official document (a book or letter, a code of law or formal constitution) and the legal witnesses. Authority rests with someone or something that is authentic, and which can be documented.

There is yet one other aspect to the problem of authority in pre-Christian society that is of interest to our topic. This aspect emerges in the constitution of the innumerable private associations and clubs (the Greek *eranos* or *thiasios*; the Roman *sodalitas* or *collegium*), so popular in ancient times that first the Roman State, then the Early Church and Synagogue issued legislation against this secret society life, fearing that solidarity to it would undermine the established patterns of authority or social control.

What distinguishes the life in these associations from that in Church or State is the voluntary custom of joining forces together for some common interest shared by only those who care to join the group and its specific interest which could range from the most sublime to the most ridiculous. Association members would pledge complete obedience to the authority of the elected officers and to the constitution of the club. This voluntary submission to the institutional authority within these associations is remarkable, because the constituency of the general membership, as well as of the leadership more often than not transcended the social, racial and religious barriers of segregation, as dominant in ancient as it still is in modern society. Such "brotherhoods," as they often called themselves, acknowledged a self-imposed authority within themselves even though for the members there was no longer "Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female" (Gal. 3), and this clearly demonstrates that the problem of authority is not limited to religion as such, nor to Christianity in particular. Regardless of how other universal religions establish their claims of authority, in embarking as Christians on maintaining and defending the universal authority

of God in Christ and His Church, we face two constant dangers. Either our attempts are frustrated by our own (or our listener's) false identification of Christianity's "other-worldly" authority as simply another form of social control, or our attempts end in irrelevancy by claiming an authority that is not only "not of the world," but also not even "*in* the world."

#### AUTHORITY IN ISRAEL

How did Israel, the people of God, go about maintaining and documenting God's universal authority, or "radical monotheism" in the ambiguity of history and within a pluralistic society?

The documentation and authentication of Israel's claim is in the realm of universal history, witnessed by Israel and the Gentiles. Both parties are witnesses to the covenant of God with Mankind. God's authority is recognized first not by Abraham or Moses, but by Adam, Cain, and Noah. Furthermore, Israel defended its allegiance to the authority of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in full knowledge of the fact that man (Everyman; but especially Israel!) is constantly and permanently tempted to yield to claims of other authorities. The covenant can be broken. Faith can become unbelief. Allegiance to God as ultimate authority can become perverted into idolatry. In the mythology of ancient cultures reinterpreted, Israel too affirms the existence, the authority, the truth of Satan, the "ape of God," the Tempter. The myth of life's fateful submission to a dual authority (good vs. evil; life vs. death; construction and destruction; etc.) is de-mythologized in Israel by elevating the underlying moral problem to the level of historical encounter and existential decision. For Israel the problem of authority is that of motivating absolute allegiance, commitment, loyalty, faithfulness. But Israel's theologians were not Kierkegaardian psychologists or existentialists, or Tillichian ontologists. They were historians who dared to interpret an historical engagement, a life commitment, in terms of law—in terms of the familiar covenant concept. Religious authority is covenant authority. As a covenant ratified and authenticated in recorded and empirical history, and as including a federation of different clans as a new people, God's people, this was the birth of a new concept of religion, and with it a new way of speaking about authority.

To apply the contract concept of political-diplomatic, social-eco-

nostic, and legal covenant to the I-Thou relationship between God and Man has many implications; but only three shall interest us in view of our general topic.

(1) The author of the covenant establishes his authority in the salvation-history that empirically is always antedating man's present religious experience of something numinous or the like (the psychological, ontological orientation of authority in Schleiermacher and Otto). The covenant author is creator. Religious authority does not exclude, but includes authority over world and creation. God's authority is not speculative, metaphysical, mythological (as in ancient philosophy and early Christian gnosticism), but is historical, empirical, active. To define what Israel means by authority is to define what Israel means when it speaks of God's revelation. For Israel God is creator and in history; therefore, neither is Nature itself (the object of our modern natural sciences), nor is History itself (the object of our studies in the humanities) the absolute norm or authority. God is not History or Nature; Nature and History are not God. But God is in history, in nature. God's authority is therefore not ambiguous by nature or definition; rather, it confronts us ambiguously, i.e. in history and nature, yet decisively and absolutely, i.e. as covenant.

(2) The covenant author assures himself and his covenant partners (technically as a matter of legal protection; theologically as a matter of "Certainty") that the covenant commitments are valid not only at a given time in the universal history of mankind or the private life of the individual believer, but remain valid "for ever and ever," throughout the ups and downs of cultural change, historical evolution, and personal experience of growth or decay. Absolute authority on God's side is interpreted as voluntarily pledged eternal faithfulness of God. This pledge is authenticated by God Himself, but also by witnesses: Israel's covenant representatives and interpreters. If Israel's representatives fail to execute their duty as witnesses, the covenant author can call other (non-Israelite!) witnesses to the stand to remind Israel of the true nature of authority (notice the normative role of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian history in Israel's canonical covenant history). The covenant representatives as authorities in Israel can be any one or all of the following:—priest or prophet, institutional or charismatic leader, wise man, elder, scribe, or king, a priestly or lay leader; he can be man



or woman, the experienced old or the inexperienced, yet chosen, young.

(3) Covenant author, covenant witnesses and covenant partners share, as the mutually recognized basis for the past contract ratification and for present and future covenant allegiance and renewal, the authentic covenant document, the authority of the written or engraved document. In the course of history, Israel produced a number of different covenant codes, each authoritative at its own time and in its own place in Israel's bizarre history down to the Exile. The periodic covenant renewals in "Israel" and "Judah," even the occasional threats of covenant cancellation (e.g. Hosea's "Not-My-People") and the promise of a "new covenant" (e.g. Jeremiah), do not produce a series of mutually independent, written covenant contracts, but a series of constant reinterpretations of the original, primitive authentic covenant code, the "testament" of Moses. The written Law of Moses thus became as authoritative as the successive law extensions as law enforcements in the written, "Canonical" form and in the oral form of "the tradition of the elders." The written document, the "oracles of God," comprising Law and Promise, enjoy an authority not only as historical witnesses, but also as presently translated and interpreted by the scribe, judge, prophet, priest, or wise man. In the cultic context of the annual covenant renewal ceremonies, with the reading of the covenant code before the ever new, because ever changing constituency of the covenant community, "blessings" and "curses," "beatitudes" and "woes" are received in accepting or rejecting authority. Such acceptance or rejection is not the psychic disposition of some faithful or faithless Israelite, but the public declaration or confession of solidarity with the community's commitment in the social, political, and institutional religious field. There was no dichotomy between authority of the Letter and authority of the Spirit.

The history of the pre-Exilic covenant people teaches us two things: On the one hand, we learn that absolute and transcendental authority does not speak for itself. Attempts to prove the contrary (the lightning flashes in Cecil DeMille's movie *Ten Commandments?*) end up where they belong, in the category of the fairy-tales. In order to be understood and applied, God's authority must be expressed in a form, or forms, intelligible to the men and women of the times in which it is to be relevant. In Israel this was

done by employing the covenant formula with its ceremonies for ratification, its document and witnesses. Not only does religion not have a language of its own (to express itself it uses the nearest or native culture and the most feasible tools it provides), but it also does not have forms of authority of its own. What Paul Tillich and others have said about the problem of language and thought or symbol (how can God be spoken of intelligibly or imagined truthfully?) should also be said of divine authority as the truth of God and the veracity of an organized religious community.

On the other hand, we learn from the protest of prophets and other critics of Jewish religious society never to lose sight of the constant danger and temptation for us of rationalizing, secularizing the empirical manifestations and institutions of divine authority. However, it must be emphatically said here that Israel's prophets were not denouncing all organized, institutional religious authority in the name of moral conscience of the individual believer as the ultimate criterion, thus making William Penns and Thoreaus out of the prophets. When the true critic of organized religious authority spoke up against priests, false prophets, wise men, elders, judges, kings, or any one who misled and misrepresented Israel—even when his criticism went so far as to call for a suspension of the whole covenant, the end of all organized religion and institutional authority—he was calling Israel, empirical Israel, to repentance. Forms and norms of authority were renounced not as expression of modern social or ideological revolutions, but as expression of religious fervor that was stimulated by the empirical realization that God's delegated authority was empirically not realized faithfully enough. Criticism of authority arose not because of the use, but because of the abuse of authority.

Nonconformists, dissenters, reformers, liberals have often erred in seeking patrons among the prophets for their modern denunciations of all authority in religious matters. But latter-day grand-inquisitors and modern religious executives as easily forget that all authority, even that of the State, while to be executed "in the world," is not "of the world." The exercise of civic authority (e.g. Solomon's authority as judge, as legislator and executor of justice), while distinctly different from the exercise of divine authority, nevertheless is also subject to the ultimate authority of God which is at

least tentatively acknowledged in the use of oaths and other traditionally sacred devices.

The history of post-Exilic Judaism can add two further points of interest to our discussion. For one, we see authority waxing in the increasingly complex structure of institutional (especially Levitical) offices in the Second Temple, the emerging variety of offices in synagogues and schools with "authoritative" centers in Persia, Palestine and Egypt. Both historically and theologically interesting is the development of authority in sectarian Judaism with its hasidic-spiritual or zealous-political aspirations in the name of a new, or renewed, order and authority. Intense spirituality, even of a mystical, apocalyptic "other-worldly" nature, can (contrary to all traditional rational hypothesizing) go hand in hand with very empirical norms and forms of authority (the history of Christian mysticism offers many parallels).

Another point of interest is authority waning into seemingly purely transcendental (or, if you please, purely individual) forms and norms. For Job the authoritative representatives of the covenant are no longer those who claim to be such, but it is God Himself in the whirlwind who vindicates His claim of final authority in the face of diabolic counterclaims. The Psalmist's quest for God, aggravated by the successful, authoritative behavior of the godless, is answered, however, not outside organized religion, but within, as evident in the references to cleansing, offering, the fallen lot, dwelling in the house of the Lord, preparation of tables, etc., yet experienced as God's own direct vindication. It is in the area of cultus, of ritual, worship, being "in the presence of the Lord" that man most easily and most quickly loses, but also regains, the proper perspective in the use and understanding of authority.

Prophetic and priestly concepts of authority, based on Israel's traditionally empirical eschatology (that is, God vindicated in the actual national history of Israel), are transformed by political events into apocalyptic authority, one that is vindicated in the still unknown future. The Book of Daniel announces God's authority restored not only in the lives of martyrs like Daniel, but foremost in the coming "Son of Man," the individual divine agent of authority or the corporate image of restored Israel, initiating the regained theocracy, rule of God that was lost in paradise. Whether the authority of "the Son of Man" is that of the renewed covenant



community of Israel, the new Israel, or that of the second, the new Adam (man), its association with the Davidic Messianic authority of the coming lay ruler in Israel accounts for growing conflict in historic Israel over how to maintain God's authority empirically.

History did not resolve Israel's basic conflict. The rising tide of messianic rebellions in the first half of the first century of our era, the period that witnessed the historic origin of Christianity, reveals the unresolved problem of norms of authority in Israel in the internal bloody tensions between zealots and Pharisees, and in the tragic dilemma of Israel's Holy War against Rome. The Ministry of Jesus with its proclamation of the empirically renewed absolute authority of God (the rule, reign, kingdom of God) was ended by the categorical denunciation of Israel of any such claim. The teenagers of Jesus' time, who had denounced Jesus, faced as old men the massive attempt of a clique of religious fanatics rebelling against all secular authority in the name of God, and denounced this last historic move as well (see Josephus's account of *The Jewish War*). Modern Zionism and conservative Judaism are heirs to this unresolved historical problem of Israel's authority among, and for, the Gentiles. Rabbinic and Hasidic-mystic Judaism resolved the problem by converting the heritage into a corpus of authoritative laws, or into charismatic, psychological categories (see Martin Buber's *For The Sake Of Heaven* as a modern Jew's analysis in fictional form).

#### AUTHORITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

People in Palestine listening to Jesus preaching the authority of God might easily have taken him to be either a zealot or a Pharisee. Jesus was misunderstood by both parties and rejected by all. Even his disciples forsook and denied him. His authority at the Cross seemed to have failed them, just as he may have felt that God had failed him (Ps. 22). Not unlike a zealot Jesus had spoken of the rule of God already and concretely at work, both spiritually in the mighty works of messianic relief, and secularly in riding as monarchic lay-Messiah from the house of David into "his" Jerusalem. He even let his disciples get away with wearing arms; however, unable to deny this apparent historic fact, our present gospel accounts emphasize that Jesus at any rate forbade the use of arms. The Gospel of John sharpens the issue by having Jesus claim to be one with

the Father, and that in his actions God's own authority was at work. (See especially John 5 and 8.)

Like Pharisees, Sadducees, and other Jews Jesus clearly distinguished between the authority of God and of Caesar. The authority of the religious leaders is no more, but no less a delegated authority from God than is Caesar's. Though the two kinds of authority delegated are different, and each must receive the respect that is its due, both representatives of authority are equally responsible to God on the day of the parousia of the Son of Man (see the Apocalyptic Discourses of Jesus in Mark 13 and parallels).

All authority, delegated by God, will eventually be judged; that means, it is to consider itself as responsible authority. Authority not only must be judged, but it also must judge and rule over others. All delegated authority has this god-given function, whether one is a parent, educator, civic authority, judge, politician; or whether one is charged with the religious ministry (but moral authority as teacher in Sunday School or as preacher in civic affairs is *not* the same as the religious authority of the minister of the gospel). Authority's own judgment (condemnation or vindication) lies not within man or society or even within the realms of history and culture. Reward for well-executed authority, vindication of misunderstood or disrespected authority, or punishment of false authority is not necessarily a this-worldly possibility; but it is certainly, and then in a final and absolute degree, an other-worldly destiny.

With the Spirit endowment by the resurrected, reigning Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is given or delegated "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28), the Church assumes for better or worse the authority "in His Name." As Jesus' authority (or power, glory) was manifest in the forgiveness of sins (Mk. 2:10), in the exorcism of Satanic authority (Lk. 10:19), and in his teaching (Mt. 7:29), so also in the same areas is the delegated authority of the disciples and apostles (Mt. 10:1; 18:18; 28:19 f.; John 14:12). Perhaps we need to rethink the all too familiar assumption in present-day Christianity that such statements of delegated authority apply to all Christians, to every believer (priesthood of all believers!), especially if they claim to be gifted with "special gifts" (see Acts 8; 1 Cor. 12 and 14). The Church's use of "the Name of Jesus" in preaching, prayer and healing, and the free use of "blessings" in the name of Jesus by almost everybody who thinks to be somebody, is certainly

another way in which Christ's authority is used; but whether it is rightly so used should not be taken as a matter of course.

As in the past with the Israel of the Old Covenant, so now with the new Israel of the Spirit, the renewed covenant (in His blood) does not abolish all previous covenant authority and organization, but establishes and delegates new authority, new "services." New or renewed authority calls for new or renewed delegation of authority. Moses authorized 70 Elders, but rejected the proposed common priesthood of all believers advocated by Korach and his party (Num. 11 and 16). When Israel "became like the Gentiles" by deliberately calling for the institution of hereditary monarchy (and with it the institutional representation of secular authority), there arose plenty of criticism against this religiously unconstitutional extension and bureaucratization of authority. But God, who rejected Korach, not only tolerated David, but blessed his house with the promise that from it should rise the future Messiah, the ideal representation of absolute authority in Israel.

In extending authority to legally authorized covenant witnesses (by virtue of their eye-witness to history: the life and resurrection of Christ; see Acts 1; 1. John 1:1 f.), Jesus does what God did to Moses and Aaron, and what Moses did to the Elders, to the Sons of Aaron, and to Joshua. Such legally valid and commonly accepted delegated authority was expressed in social images that reflect this relationship: covenant contracts, diplomatic representation through ambassadors, oral or written message deliverers (kerygma), or the familiar patterns in army life, civic or domestic life (father-child; lord-servant; husband-wife, to name only a few). Even images from life in nature can serve the purpose, such as the shepherd and his sheep, the vine and its branches, the hen and her chickens, and the like. Such images are found in the New Testament to characterize two different authoritative relationships: that of Christ or God to "his own" (Israel or Mankind), and that of Christ's ambassadors to His Church. Other authoritative witnesses to God's authority in Christ are "the Scriptures," John the Baptist, and the "Teaching of the Apostles" (Acts 2), "the standard of teaching to which you were committed" (Rom. 6:17), "the traditions" and "the sound teachings." Yet another agent of God's authority is the State, "the governing authorities," appointed by God as "ministers of God" (Rom. 13).



There is a secular and sacred authority, each as minister of God in its own right and with a different task which may at times overlap with that of the other (see e.g. 1 Cor. 6:1-11) and thereby pose problems that often puzzle lawyer and theologian alike. This "twilight zone" of delegated authority from God is the subject of much recent discussion in Christian ethics and in our own efforts at H.S.F. of relating "Church and Community." What participants in this vital discussion must learn from reading the New Testament concerning authority is this: delegated authority from God, whether secular or sacred, is more than a social convention or position; it is a vocation in the true sense of the word, and not just a job. Our "power" or "authority," whether executing "his wrath on the wrongdoer" (Rom. 13), or offering grace or withstanding sin (John 20:23), is determined by two basic considerations: (1) the author of the power invested in us; (2) the objective in the use of our authority.

While almost everyone is clear on the first point, i.e. that God Himself is the author of all authority, there is a great confusion on the second point. It is the unanimous witness of the whole New Testament that the powers we are confronting with the authority of God, "the armor of God," are not "flesh and blood," but Satanic, "other-worldly" powers. To be sure, there are petty "flesh-and-blood" problems that often do face ministers of God (see some of the practical issues in Paul's letters); but there is no clearly marked line that tells the agent of God's authority when he has left the "flesh-and-blood" area and has entered the domain of Satan. Another way of saying the same thing is this: wherever the understanding of sin as power of Satan and Death, of "the world" and of "darkness," is psychologized, sentimentalized, rationalized into "mere" social or psychic disorder, or identified with lack of morality or virtue as commonly understood, there is a consequent confusion as to what is God's authority and what is the task of "the ministers of God."

The understanding of authority in the New Testament cannot be evaluated apart from the criteria established by the total Canon of Holy Scripture, that is to say, it cannot be isolated from the Old Testament. Though the New Testament has other ways of bringing the problem into focus, the Old Testament concept of covenant is retained as one way of theologizing about Biblical authority. Tak-

ing our start from this basic concept, we would arrive at the following constitutive elements of Biblical authority.

(1) The originator and activator of authority is the author of the covenant contract. He is not only initiator, but also provides the criterion of all authority which he freely delegates, which is variously incorporated, and which is constantly distorted and perverted by the rival authority, "the God of this world," who usurps God by imitating him wherever and in what ever way he can. No imitation is too sacrosanct for the great confuser (*diabolos*).

(2) God's authority is established and vindicated in the history of salvation for his people (Israel's, or Jesus', history as means of salvation for mankind). This history is authoritative, "canonical," normative, and is the basis of the covenant relationship authenticated by the covenant code which, thus in turn, assumes authoritative value. The covenant Law is authoritative only in conjunction with the concurrent, or recalled, salvation-history. If one of the two loses its authoritative character for the covenant partner, so automatically does the other.

(3) A third constitutive element in Biblical covenant authority is that of the witness, guardian, and interpreter of the covenant transaction, the salvation-event. Israel's faith rests not only on the author of faith, God Himself, but also on "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," on Moses, Aaron, the prophets, elders, and scribes. The Church of Christ looks for authority to "the author and perfecter of the faith," Jesus; but it also rests on "apostles and prophets" who attest to the validity, i.e. historicity, of the contract transaction of God in Christ, the incarnate, crucified, resurrected and ascended reigning Lord. God Himself—but Jesus also (*filioque!*)—confirms, or rather, has already confirmed this testimony of the witnesses by sending "the Holy Spirit," the Counselor, Comforter, Advocate. Without the Spirit, the delegated authority of the covenant witnesses is incomplete.

(4) Affirmation, recognition and acknowledgement of God's authority, of the authority of Scripture, and of the delegated authority of the salvation witnesses is Biblically expressed in two ways: (a) by entering into the presence of the Lord, i.e. in worship; (b) by walking with, and growing, maturing, in the Lord, i.e. in ethics. Biblical authority is born of, and maintained by, obedience. But to avoid the ever present danger of misrepresenting this obedience as

just one other cultural, social convention—to demonstrate that this is faith-obedience and carries in it God's eschatological authority whose purpose is either to heal and bless, or to judge and curse—we must prove through concrete actions (worship and ethics) that God is really active and in power. Obedience to the mission of the church to all peoples is another, maybe a third way, in which Biblical authority must manifest itself, if it knows its Lord.

#### CONCLUSION

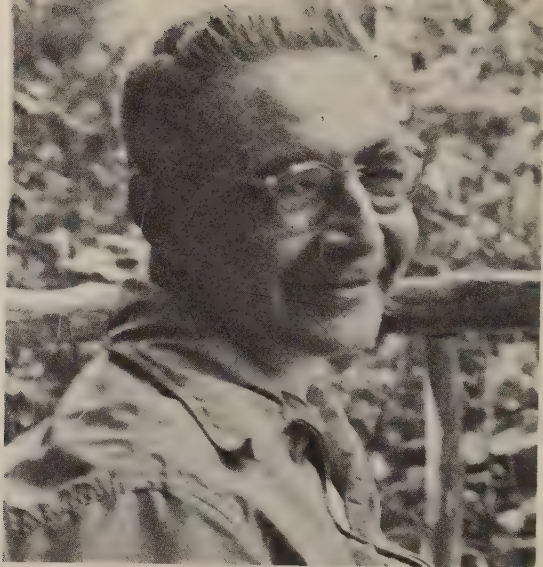
The problem of authority, as we have approached it and analyzed it, has turned out to be at the center of Biblical theology. For to speak of "authority" is to speak of many different things which yet are all tied together. Authority can be synonymous with power, and thus reflect not only God's power, and all the other powers "in heaven, on earth, and under the earth," but also the delegated power of man, ecclesiastical or civic man. Authority can be synonymous with action, thus reflecting the whole range of God's (and Satan's) activities in creation, salvation, and "in the world to come." Authority implies disclosure, revelation, incarnation, for how can man speak intelligibly of anything that is God's? Authority can be synonymous with truth, righteousness and "right," over against error and falsehood. Authority can be synonymous with glory, bliss, vindication, experienced as an alternative to doom, curse and sin.

To speak of God's authority as relevant to man, is to maintain that forgiveness of sins is possible; that abundant, eternal life is presently available to man. The Bible does not speak of God's authority as a metaphysical power of cosmic proportions, identical with the authoritative processes of life's mysterious evolution; nor does it continue a venerable old tradition of mankind that knows of a sentimental, mythological image of the Old Boss, the Father Image of primitive myth or of the modern Freudian subconscious. The fact that authority can be spoken of in just such ways, the Bible never ignores, but rather warns against. Instead, the Bible insists on redefining authority by recalling for man that God's authority, once lost in an historic encounter (the first Adam), was once again regained in an historic encounter (the second Adam).

Biblical authority is trinitarian. We thereby recognize that authority is by nature historical; it can, no it must, confront us in a



variety of delegated extensions that become "means of grace" and "tools of authority" to us only but readily, if and when we acknowledge in them the authority of God Himself. In that sense authority can almost be spoken of as a sacrament. What Paul once said to the Philippians (2:12-13) could be taken as a summary for all who strive not only to understand what God's authority is, but also how to execute, or respond to, some delegated authority of God in Church or State: "as you have always obeyed (some delegated authority), so now work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."



Frederick Neumann

# ECCLESIASTES — PHILOSOPHER WITHOUT PROPOSITIONS

Frederick Neumann

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*"What is the meaning of life?" "There is no meaning." "Why! Something, at least, should be in it for me." "There is nothing in it for you." "But then, a man must clean despair of everything." "You are a fool," says Ecclesiastes. "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!"*

Who was Ecclesiastes? The name is not a proper name. It represents an attempt to turn into Greek the Hebrew *Koheleth* which probably denotes the office of speaker in an assembly. About the man himself we know no more than that he was probably a public teacher of wisdom in Jerusalem. The majority of scholars today date his book at about 250 B.C. for which date there is good cumulative evidence that has lately been strengthened by the discovery of a scroll fragment at Qumran. (James Muilenburg, *Bulletin of American School of Oriental Research*, N. 135, Oct. 1954)

Koheleth in his book introduces himself to us as a thinker, filled with the fervent desire to "seek wisdom and the sum of things" (6:25)\*, to go to the root of the matter. He studied "all that happens under heaven," "everything that is done under the sun." The noun "everything" or "all" occurs with this meaning no less than eleven times in this little book of 222 verses. (1:7, 8, 9, 13, 14; 2:11; 4:1,

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\*All Scripture quotations are from R.S.V., Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, 1952



4, 15; 8:9, 17) We should not level it down to Oriental exaggeration or a merely rhetorical expression. Nor is it poetical or mythicopoetical as in the title of the Akkadian Gilgamesh: "He who saw everything." It must be taken seriously. Of course, Koheleth did not pretend omniscience. He sought to grasp the common factor that makes all things and events to be. This common factor Koheleth calls "that which is." "That which is, is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out?" (7:24). Now the clause "that which is" renders the Hebrew *mah shehājāh*. If you transform it into a question and translate the Hebrew *mah hu shehājāh?* into Greek, it runs "Tí to ōn?" "What is being? What does it mean to be?" With this great question Aristotle had summed up the central concern of Greek ontological thought since Thales of Miletus. I am not now concerned with proving or disproving Greek influence on Koheleth. What I wish to show or rather to start showing is that he was a genuine philosopher.

To the ancient question after the nature of being Koheleth offers his answer in the first verse of his book which he solemnly repeats at the close: "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity." The whole of reality is like a fleeting breath.

This grave assertion is then expounded throughout the book. Over and over again, Koheleth starts a train of thought with a comprehensive statement on which he then elaborates not by drawing conclusions from it but by letting its force work. As Johannes Pedersen has shown (*Israel, Its Life and Culture* I, II, p. 109ff.), the Hebrew mind starts with a general idea which is not conceived as an abstract magnitude but bears concrete shape, then proceeds to the individual traits in which the general expresses itself.

"All is vanity." Using our own thought forms, one may compare the statement to the flame of a torch with which Koheleth lights up the whole of nature and human affairs.

He starts with nature. The visible world offers him a picture of stark internal contrast. Rest and movement are opposed to one another. The movements themselves are periodically reversed. The earth that remains forever stands over against the passing generations of men. The sun opposes itself in describing the contrary movements of rising, setting and rising again. The wind blows to the south, then changes its direction, going round to the north—"All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full." (1:7) Why is it

not full? The rendering adopted by the Vulgate, the early medieval Targum, classical Jewish exegetes, and some recent commentators provides the answer: "To the place *whence* the streams flow, there they flow again" instead of the more widely accepted reading, "To the place *where* the streams flow . . ." (Cf. Robert Gordis: "Kohleth: The Man and His World," 2nd edition. N. Y. 1955 ad loc.)

That this view of the world is intendedly comprehensive and all-inclusive can, I believe, be proved from the fact known since the 12th century (Abraham Ibn Esra, Cf. Gordis, Ibid. ad loc. cit.) that Koheleth uses the Greek doctrine of the four elements of which the whole of nature is composed. It is worthwhile to note in passing what the Semitic mind does with the four elements. With Koheleth the earth is not an abstract substance but the real earth on which we stand with our legs. The notion of fire as a refined stuff is replaced by the vision of the sun, giver of light and heat. The air is the wind as it blows. Finally, the water is the running streams and the sea into which they flow.

Some seventy years later, Ben Sirach could write: "All things are twofold, one opposite the other." (42:24) "Look upon all the works of the Most High; they are in pairs, one the opposite of the other." (33:15) Koheleth's influence on Ben Sirach is highly probable. However, as we shall see, Koheleth unlike the later writer does not provide his contemplation of opposites with a comfortable background.

Every movement is matched by a contrary movement. One might ask how under those conditions the world could exist at all. Will not the opposites cancel out? The answer is no, for they do not occur at the same time. If the sun rose and set at the same time there would be no light. Actually, there is light all day long. For the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening. Because the opposites do not coincide they can exist, each for some time, until the other takes over, again only for some time, and so it goes on and on.

Time is central in the thought of Koheleth. Yet his concept of time does not bear the sign of direction and progress. On the contrary, all occurrences move in endless circles: "Round and round goes the wind." (1:6) Constant change involves constant monotonous repetition: "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun." (1:9) Future and past bear essentially the same features. For

the time factor in everything that happens appears to serve no other purpose than to make the endless succession of opposites possible. All constellations change, but there is no discernible trend toward a goal. The processes of nature do not seem to lead to an end. They show no purpose. "What is it all about?" "Who can tell?" What we see is a meaningless coming and going. There is nothing new under the sun that could serve the mind as a vantage point from which the direction of events could be understood. "All is vanity," empty, aimless.

That is the form of being which nature shows us. One must not ascribe to Koheleth a dogmatic theory of precisely identical recurrences, world cycles in the sense of the Stoa or, more recently, of Nietzsche's regulative idea of the eternal return of the same. Such rigid interpretations are excluded by Koheleth's firm, repeated assertion that the future is unknown to us (6:12b; 7:14b; 8:7; 10:14).

In the third chapter of the book Koheleth applies his interpretation of being to human life. He starts with the famous statement that "for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under the sun." (3:1) The different occasions are again arranged in pairs of opposites as birth and death, planting and plucking up, weeping and laughing, seeking and losing, war and peace. Life requires us to do and suffer mutually incompatible things but never at the same time. Because there is a season fixed for every matter under the sun one must do one thing now and the contrary at some later juncture. Yet all that can only last for a certain time. For in the end, the opposites of birth and death actually cancel out, since our life-span is no more than the time that prevents the two from coinciding. When our time is over death overtakes birth.

Thus Koheleth applies his general ontological insight to the human lot, which is, of course, an unpardonable sin from the point of view of contemporary existentialism yet in my view quite justifiable, considering his perspective and aim. At this point it is enough to say that his thoughts can be read backward as well as forward.

Man must suffer pain, trouble and constant restlessness because his existence forms a sequence of reciprocal negations that mutually cancel out though not in reality yet in point of meaning. Finally, death speaks its incontestable No. That all life is lived in the shadow of death and that the wise man must always be mindful of it is forcefully asserted throughout the book.



The inexorable law of contrast dominates both individual and society. Human society represents a web of negations. It is fraught with jealousy, ruthless competition, exploitation of the weak by the strong and of the strong by those who are still stronger. "Man lords it over man to his hurt." (8:9)

Koheleth's view of the world is one of pathetic futility. About the course of nature he says: "All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it." (1:8) About human life: "What gain has the worker from his toil?" (3:9) "What has a man from all the toil and strain with which he toils beneath the sun? For all his days are full of pain, and his work is a vexation; even in the night his mind does not rest. This also is vanity." (2:22 f)

That is the testimony of a radically disillusioned spirit. I say "radically" because Koheleth does not feel tickled by his disenchantment. He does not draw childish comfort or perverse pleasure from his ability to see through human illusions. Nor does he teach heroic creativity despite and in defiance of, futility. His diagnosis of man's sorry plight remains unmitigated.

We must now try better to understand his diagnosis, availing ourselves of the lead he offers us. Twice in the book he sums up his life experience. In the first and second chapters he aptly acts the part of King Solomon whose wisdom, wealth and success were proverbial. He describes Solomon as applying himself to the shrewd and consistent pursuit of pleasure:

"I made great works; I built houses and planted vineyards for myself; I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees . . . I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces; I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, man's delight. So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them; I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil."

Suddenly, the lovely folk tale, for the passage quoted breathes the aroma of folk tale, comes to an abrupt end as if a splash of ice-cold water had been poured over the narrator's head:

"Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun." (2:4-11)

Solomon's shrill awareness of futility did not attend to a life of failure but rather to one of fabulous success. He had and did all he

wanted only to discover that what he had thought he would gain by his brilliant achievements was as far remote from him as it had been at the time he started off. "That is not it," he said to himself. There was a permanent gulf fixed between the realization of his many plans and desires (which he achieved) and his expectation at the bottom of his plans and desires, which he did not achieve and now knew he would never achieve.

Now many people are in the habit of projecting into the future the satisfaction of unfulfilled desire. But Koheleth's Solomon was not a trivial daydreamer. What he had actually projected into the future was a fulfillment which even the gorgeously satisfied desire cannot afford. He expected of life what life will never yield. He did not conform to reality but sought to lord it over it, therefore he had to break down. When he viewed the world and human affairs in the perspective of his breakdown, all things grinned in his face with the expression of aimlessness and worthlessness.

A second summary of Koheleth's life experience is drawn in the seventh chapter. Here he speaks in his own name, describing not the pursuit of pleasure but of knowledge and understanding. The passage again begins with a general statement in which the breakdown of his search after ultimate truth is set forth with moving force:

"That which is, is far off and deep, very deep; who can find it out?" (7:24)

He then continues:

"I turned my mind to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the sum of things, and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness which is madness." (7:25)

Let us stop here for a moment. It is a moot question whether Koheleth taught Divine retribution or whether some statements to this effect are later interpolations to blunt the edge of his radical pronouncements. Now it is certain that he did not teach an observable, calculable retribution in the sense of Job's friends. I believe, however, that he did not deny Divine retribution. He taught retribution but firmly denied that man knew the time of retribution. Let me now repeat the last quoted verse in literal translation:

"I turned my mind to know that wickedness is foolishness and folly is madness." (Rankin, *Interpreter's Bible* V, p. 68)

Folly is the retribution of wickedness. That it is so, Koheleth wanted to find out and he did. For he continues:

"And I found more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters; he who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her." (ibid. 26)

When this keen, honest thinker gave himself to the search for truth and meaning, what did he find? The traps of sex and the impenetrability of woman's mind to man's. Over two thousand years before our all too sex-minded generation this profound student of human nature knew, as some of his predecessors had known, that sexual folly brings into sharp relief the common denominator and the inherent chastisement of all human folly. It brings it into relief yet is not identical with it. For after having described the evil woman as an agent of Divine retribution, Koheleth goes on without break in continuity of thought, recording a characteristic and entirely merited disillusionment he suffered in his intellectual pursuit:

"Behold, this is what I found, says the Speaker, adding one thing to another to find the sum which my mind has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found." (ibid. 27-28)

He did not find the sum, but what he found taught him a much needed lesson. Koheleth does not join the crowd of grinning jokers whose jarring song of male superiority sounds through the taverns of the centuries. His words, studied closely in their context, are confessional. He soberly confesses that woman defied his attempt to draw the sum of things. Womanhood places an insurmountable barrier in the path of the reckless thinker who wants to make the whole realm of being yield to his intellectual conquests. To have to reckon with woman means that reality cannot be passed by. The attempt to understand what all is must fail so long as it is undertaken with the vain expectation that considers one's own life and the whole world a blank to be inscribed by the thinker's wisdom. The resistance of the so-called weaker sex irrefutably proves that the wise man lives in a vacuum like everybody else. Human wisdom carries its own depravity and grief.

Koheleth is far from condemning the search after ultimate truth in which he is passionately engaged. He confesses that the way it is actually carried out does not differ in essence from hunting for money or pleasure. The chase after meaning bears the same pathetic features as the chase after happiness in all its other forms. It



is a striving after wind. We run after mere phantoms yet every time that reality convicts one of the aimlessness of his efforts, he says to himself: "Just wait a little; I will yet find it!" What will he find in the end? The common fate of the wise and the fool, the righteous and the wicked. Death is the true sum of things. With all our phantastic anticipations of final fulfillment our real future is one we share with the brutes:

"For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth?" (3:19-21) "As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came . . . and what gain has he that he toiled for the wind, and spent all his days in darkness and grief, in much vexation and sickness and resentment?" (5:15ff)

It is not enough to state that Koheleth rejects the idea of the immortality of the soul. He positively teaches mortality. He takes death seriously, far more so than did the Egyptians and Greeks. Three hundred years later, Jesus will weep by the grave of Lazarus. The victor over death faces the king of terror with a world-overcoming compassion for his victims.

"All is vanity and a striving after wind." Is there a remedy, a way out? Can we expect a consistent thinker of Koheleth's matchless integrity to gloss over his serious defeats by adding some words of sentimental cheer? The man is far too honest for that. True, he speaks of God, and when he says God he *means* God and not a morally indifferent capricious personality, but what he has to say about God differs radically from the exhortations of glib, secondhand religiosity. Let me make a few remarks about the historical circumstances in which Koheleth thought and wrote. Life in Jerusalem about 250 B.C. made it impossible for a vigorous thinker to seek God in the same way the fathers had sought him. To the prophets of old the Lord had revealed himself in the history of his people. One may say with an emphasis that is perhaps one-sided, yet I believe not far off the mark, that the prophets interpreted the present from the future. Quoting O. S. Rankin:

"It is impossible to declare the will and purpose and judgment of God without reference to the future." (A Theological Word Book of the Bible. Ed. by Allan Richardson, p. 182)

In telling their people what God was going to do, the prophets called them to repentance or lifted them from despair. At the time of Koheleth, Palestine was a little province under the government

of the capricious Ptolemaic kings of Egypt and their corrupt underlings. Nothing of importance happened. History was engulfed by triviality. No new prophet arose, and the message of the canonical prophets could not be immediately applied at a time when the nation seemed to have lost its historical destiny. There was no future vantage point in view to restore to the present its meaning. That is the historical background for Koheleth's repeated assertion that the future is hidden from us. (See references *supra*.) Some of the mood of this statement can, I believe, be recovered from a much later document, the first book of Maccabees. After the death of Judas Maccabeus

"there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them." (I Macc. 9:27)

Now the last clause cannot be regarded as a historical statement but may well echo the mood that prevailed in certain circles during the Hellenistic period in Israel's history. The impression is strengthened in remembering the great passage in Amos 8:11:

"Behold the days are coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it." (Amos 8:11f)

Some commentators consider the references to spiritual famine a later insertion. If that assumption should prove correct, I see no need for dating the insertion later than some time during the Ptolemaic period. In that case the text from Amos would supply corroborative evidence to my sketch of Koheleth's spiritual and emotional conditions. In any case, it serves to illuminate them.

Koheleth was not a heretic. I wonder what the word heretic could have meant in Jerusalem in 250 B.C. He believed in the God of his fathers. He believed in the Torah and the prophets. Yet he needed a new and sustained effort for appropriating afresh the faith of his fathers. And here is where his philosophy comes in. He did not prove theses or lay down academic propositions. His quest for true being, pursued with radical, painful self-criticism, is carried by an impassioned inner compulsion to meet the God of his fathers in his and his fellowmen's uneventful everyday life. If God cannot be found in contemporary history, one must seek him in ordinary, inconspicuous experience. That Koheleth, following and

using with the freedom of an independent thinker the tradition of Hebrew and international wisdom literature, sought God in the normal occurrences of individual and societal life makes his message incisive and relevant to every age.

What was the outcome of his search? Did Koheleth meet God? He met him as the One who resisted him. He encountered him in the breakdown of his own and his fellowmen's striving after wind.

For what Koheleth has to say about the boring emptiness and worthlessness of the recurring opposites in nature and human life is not on a level with a detached, impersonal ontology. Only because humanity for which Koheleth is the speaker strives after wind, all that is and happens turns toward us its vacuous back. In affirming that all is vanity, he confesses on behalf of all of us that we are hunting after an unknowable future of which no more can be said than that it will turn out as meaningless as the present from which we run away. In the end, death will clinch the issue, putting the final stamp of nothingness on our obstinate attempts to extort from life its meaning.

It is God himself who frustrates our aspirations, noble or vile, as he demonstrates at every moment of time that he is quite unwilling to accept our counsel concerning how to run the show. With our irresponsible dreams of imaginary fulfillment we refuse to comply with the Divine ordering of all things and events. Following not Stoic but Old Testament tradition (Amos, Deutero-Isaiah), Koheleth asseverates in the strongest terms that "God makes everything." (11:5)

"Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he." (6:10)

In looking proudly for what the world has to offer us, we fly in the face of God. With our material and intellectual demands we wilfully ignore what he actually does: "Behold, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices." (7:29) For although we know that we depend on his providence at every moment, we hanker after dreams as if the meaning of life were an affair a man could arrange with himself.

What shall we do then? "The business that God has given the sons of men to be busy with." (3:10) With your mind and resolute action conform to the Divinely ordained junctures instead of stretching forth your hands to catch the wind. Start always with his



will, not yours. Accept your lot, not in an attitude of weak resignation but in manly, reverent submission to him on whose behest the sun runs its course, the earth stands, the winds blow, the waters flow, and every occasion in your life is formed to be used by you as best you can. Take your bearings from the Divine decrees manifest in what he has ordered to happen here and now. Do with all your strength what he gives you to do. Don't fail to enjoy what he gives you to enjoy. Toil while you must and stop in time for receiving God's good gifts. Yield yourself of his mighty providence so long as there is time. For your time is limited. Let your life be filled with the contents God provides for you, for the day will come when there will be no more contents.

In the light of this positive message the thrust of Koheleth's ontology must be appraised and appropriated. We must feel its cutting edge in order to be stopped on our megalomaniac run into nothingness. There are no dry-cut tenets to be drawn from this book. What we are taught is a spirit, an attitude toward God and his world. This spirit he calls the fear of God.

"I know that whatever God does endures for ever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has made it so, in order that men should fear before him." (3:14)

Again:

"For when dreams increase, empty words grow many; but do you fear God." (5:7)

The fear of God in Koheleth's interpretation crushes our empty dreams. It prevents man from listening to the irresponsible fancies of his deceitful heart.

For man has neither the first word nor the last. The fear of God shows us our position between the two where we ought to yield and actively respond to the will of God which is a good will, for "God has made everything beautiful in its time." (3:11)

He does not only send us trouble. His providence sweeps away our fancies for our good, not as though he were a grudger. In blocking our path, he teaches us to keep his time in humble attention to his providential dealings with us. The fear of God will lead us to take both hardships and delights from his hand. The ones we must bear as God has destined us to bear them, the others enjoy as he explicitly wants us to enjoy them.

"In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider; God has made the one as well as the other." (7:14)

As we are inclined to defer to a chimerical future the enjoyment of the pleasures granted us in the present, Koheleth strongly urges upon his readers the joyful acceptance of God's everyday gifts:

"There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God; for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?" (2:24f)

Again:

"I commend enjoyment, for man has no good thing under the sun but to eat and drink, and enjoy himself, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of life which God has given him under the sun." (8:15. Cf 4:19; 9:7ff)

Eating, drinking, sleeping (5:12), those palpable, simple pleasures stand typically for the many and different enjoyments we can have if we don't run past them. What a pleasure we can draw from the sun if instead of feeling bored by the monotony of its course we open our minds to the wonder of light: "Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun." (11:7)

This simple, unpretentious yet great verse shows along with many others that for Koheleth the beauty of God's world also includes the beauty of words, fine craftsmanship, hitting force and lyrical depth. The grave luster of the poem on old age and death at the close of the book transfigures the subject poetically without diminishing its seriousness.

Koheleth has the vital sense of fruition that is granted by the Creator to those who live in his creation instead of greedily robbing it of its contents. For the fear of God has taught him the true wisdom that "makes a man's face shine, and the hardness of his countenance is changed." (8:1) The face lights up as the deadly rigor of stubbornness is changed into living humanity.

"All is vanity and a striving after wind." I have endeavored to show that the true meaning of this central statement is penitential. Koheleth is a sacred writer who teaches seriousness over against childishness. Much of our Christianity today is childish owing to the confusion of evangelical childlikeness with flat infantilism. We are in dire need of listening to this great teacher of mature sobriety.

It is childish to complain that Koheleth has no message from the core of the Biblical revelation, God's abounding love and unfathomable mercy. He keeps his place, discharging his particular duty, teaching no more than he knows is incumbent upon him. With this stern self-discipline Koheleth practices what he teaches. If we listen

to his limited message and repent of our vain striving after wind, we will be more receptive to the far greater things God has revealed in his word. "When I became a man, I gave up childish ways," writes Paul in one of the profoundest chapters in the Bible. The fear of God as Koheleth taught it is a strong remedy for childishness in its many forms and disguises. I for one could not do without this teacher.

Koheleth's teaching is preparatory. And that makes him the genuine philosopher he is. For true philosophy is preparatory.

His ontology serves the preparatory purpose of making the continued striving after wind disgusting to himself and to his readers. Beyond that he does not go. I do not see that his teaching needs correction in taking our standards of judgment from the New Testament although the revelation of the love of God in Christ will inspire those who have received it with a larger and deeper vision of reality.

For your vision changes, depending upon the place where you stand. From the top of a high mountain you can see far more than from a low hill. However, in making this statement, I am afraid of Koheleth who might reply, "It is not from wisdom that you say this."

He is right. For there are high mountains of self-righteousness and intellectual complacency that need being made low. The Christian will better not pretend to have climbed a high mountain. If he understands his call, he will rather step down, descending to the bottom of the dark shaft, then lift up his eyes to behold the glory of the stars and take his bearings from them. How does Koheleth's ontology present itself in the light of the love of God in Christ?

"O vanity of vanities. All is vanity!" The Hebrew word *hevel*, rendered with "vanity," is translated by the Septuagint with *mataiôtēs*. This word the apostle uses in Romans 8:20:

"For the creation was subjected to futility (*mataiôtēti*), not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Paul is clearly aware of the compulsory clash of opposites that makes the realm of mundane being one of "bondage to decay." With priestly sympathy he listens to the groaning of the whole creation in which he himself participates through his body. Yet the

groaning of the creation, including the children of God, is in travail. The sufferings of this present time are the birth-pangs of the age to come. Paul saw what Koheleth saw, but Christ had taught him to draw from it the hope of cosmic redemption.

Did the study of Koheleth leave its mark upon the mind of Jesus? I believe it did and will show it very briefly from the story of the temptation (Matt. 4 and Lk. 4)

Koheleth did not know God as the Father. But Jesus' complete obedience to, and trust in, God's fatherly providence does take strong consideration of Koheleth's appeal for seriousness and humble sobriety in keeping God's time.

"Man shall not live by bread alone." It is Koheleth's teaching that man is never in a position to state what he needs most badly. He must submit to every present Divine decree, "every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord." (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3)

"You shall worship the Lord God, and him alone shall you serve." The refusal to buy world rule from the devil breaks the dream in which man's striving after wind has found its most cruel, lethal expression throughout history. The carpenter from Nazareth humbly conformed to his Father's will that had not placed him in a position where he could wield worldly power.

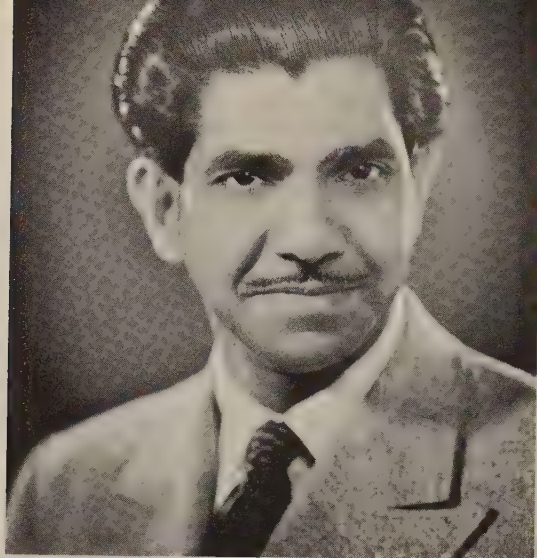
"You shall not tempt the Lord your God." To tempt the Lord God by trying to force his hand is tantamount to claiming the initiative in one's relation to him. Koheleth pits the fear of God against the human arrogance that expects God to dance to our piping.

If the temptation story reveals Jesus' decision on how to start his public ministry, I believe it can be stated, soberly, that in preparing for his decision he had availed himself of the wisdom of Koheleth. The close study of this book may have contributed to making Jesus "as hard as steel," quoting the words put in the mouth of his mother by Dorothy Sayers in "The Man Born To Be King."

We know nothing about Koheleth's life, but much that is known of his after-life is triste. He has been compared not only to Omar Khayyam but also to Heinrich Heine and Bertrand Russell. He has been called a skeptic, a disappointed lover, the spokesman of a "resignation that comes near to practical atheism." Now such epithets and comparisons are not in good taste, to say the least. I wish, however, in conclusion, to pay my own due to human folly and, for



my part, run the risk of bad taste in drawing a comparison not with regard to Koheleth's thought and teaching but rather in point of passion, depth of feeling, integrity of character and performance, iron discipline, courageous presentation of tormentingly shrill dissonances, and of the harmony in which they are honestly resolved. In these respects, and these only, the words of the wisdom of Koheleth remind me of the instrumental movements and the final hymn to joy in Beethoven's ninth symphony.



John G. Arapura

# THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY IN PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

John G. Arapura

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Authority is a word that evokes negative emotive reactions in the minds of many contemporary philosophers and of most scientists. The prejudice against "authority" is not surprising when we consider the history of the long struggle for emancipation from ecclesiastical and political "authorities" that philosophy and especially science had to wage. Although the hero and martyr complexes are a bit irrelevant for scientists today, especially in free societies, considering the almost universal adulation of science, there is a historical basis for resentment against external interference. The persecutions of the Socrases, the Spinozas and the Galeleos and the subtler interventions and incursions from religious quarters into the sanctuary of disinterested and free quest for knowledge have inhibited scientists and philosophers from taking kindly to the concept of authority.

In some measure, owing to historical reasons the conflict of science and free-thinking philosophy with the church authorities has taken on the aspect of conflict with religion as such insofar as the church has been the repository of the authority that once was tragically occupied with the suppression of free inquiry after knowledge. The freedom *for* unfettered inquiry inevitably came to be treated as freedom *from* authority and even freedom *from* religion. In the case of both historical religion and historical science there has been a pathetically inadequate understanding of the nature of both free-

dom and authority. This misunderstanding has centered around the externalization of freedom and authority and their resultant mutual alienation and polarization. And in the situation of already existent externalization there could have been no welcome escape from the dialectical conflict between them; and freedom could become irrelevant and meaningless and could not even have been born but for the resistance that authority offered. Thus freedom and authority do become a dimension of each other and the background of each other's self-definition. Thus science needed to fight against religion and religion against its own authorities. It should in apposition be remembered that the struggle against external authority is by no means a bi-lateral struggle of science against religion for it is also as much or even more a struggle that has always been going on within the heart of religion itself. Even the most authoritarian religions (in the sense of external authority) have to come to terms with mysticism which is one of the most powerful though silent affirmations of freedom from external authority. Also a time may soon come when by the same token the position of science versus religion with respect to freedom of inquiry will have to be reversed, for the emancipation of the human spirit engaged in the quest for truth may have to come about in the very near future through the protest of religion against science, as science by the very logic of the course it has adopted, is bound to impose bans on certain questions, especially questions that savour of ultimate concern, an authority which paradoxically enough is already being exercised in great measure. In a notable manner the philosophies that depend on science as the ultimate source of authority—particularly do I have Logical Positivism in mind—are even exaggerating the rigour of this embargo. This authoritarianism in reverse is here already. The support of the mob, educated as well as uneducated, with its curious pseudo-religion, which we might call "scientism," is helping to make this authoritarianism a threatening factor. Man's freedom to seek knowledge is not only gauged by the questions he may be permitted to ask about the movement of the stars, but also by the absence of prohibiting legislation on the questions he may ask about the destiny of the soul and the nature of God. In any case conflict between freedom and authority, whether it takes the shape of concrete science-religion conflict or of one within religion itself, is significant only dialectically, and to talk about either of them



non-dialectically and ideally in the background of such conflict is to talk nonsense.

#### EXTRINSIC AUTHORITY IN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

It is the mark of the mutual externalization of freedom and authority that the one operates as the instrument of resistance to the other; yet in this very resistance there is the reflection of an identity that is lost and is to be found again which binds them together in their ultimate teleologies. Now, insofar as science and philosophy are concerned with resisting an authority from external sources and in thus asserting freedom for their respective disciplines they understand authority purely as extrinsic authority. Thus Philipp Frank states:—

If we look at science as a human enterprize as we look at art, religion, or politics, we notice two facts which seem difficult to reconcile. On the one hand science is a doctrine which is based on experience about sense-observations. It can be applied to technology, and becomes in this way the basis of all advances in industry and warfare. If a doctrine of science is successful in these respects, we say that it is "valid"; in the opposite case we call it "false." In this way and only in this way can science distinguish between right and wrong. But on the other hand the history of old and new times have shown that authorities, organized or unorganized, have tried to direct the way in which the results of science have been formulated, taught in schools, or presented in print. As the results of science can be checked by their technical failure or success, it is difficult to understand how any authority can modify or influence these results.<sup>1</sup>

Frank refers<sup>2</sup> to Plato's *Laws*, where "we read of the scientific problem whether celestial bodies, sun and the planets, are made of the same stuff as our earth, of the same fluids and rocks, or of other material." "In Plato's time no scientific method existed which could check any of the answers by direct sense-observation." Plato was so convinced of the moral harmfulness of the "materialistic" hypothesis that he recommended imprisonment for everybody who teaches this astrophysical doctrine.

<sup>1</sup>Bryson, L., Finkelstein, L., MacIver, R. M., McKeon, R., (Editors), *Freedom and Authority in our Time*, (Article, "The role of authority in the interpretation of science") being The Twelfth Symposium of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 362

Why was this extrinsic authority exercised? Frank explains that this was due to the absence of the "authority" of science, pertinent to its own procedures. "This lack of a 'verdict' by 'experts' gave other types of authorities a possibility of intervention."<sup>1</sup> Following this, we understand why Plato chose the spiritualistic hypothesis of heavenly bodies. "As between two 'astrophysical' theses no decision could be made on the basis of observable facts, Plato did not see any objection to making the choice on the basis of the effect on moral behaviour." The same explains the attitude of the Church towards the Copernican system, observes Frank.

As no decision could be reached on the basis of astronomical observations, one was free to make the choice according to what was a better basis for teaching moral behaviour. It seemed obvious that an interpretation is the better in this respect, the better it fits into the traditional interpretation of the Bible, and the more it is in agreement with the traditional Scholastic philosophy upon which all indoctrination in religion and morals was based. The decision about the acceptance of a scientific theory, in such cases, can only be made and will always be made by those powers which decide what kind of human conduct is desirable. This means that ultimate decision rests with "authority" and not with scientists.<sup>2</sup>

Frank, however, does not get emotional about this and he seems to a remarkable degree to be free from martyr complex. For he states objectively, "In such cases the interference of" authorities "is not only understandable but necessary. Probably the same kind of interference has taken place at all periods of history." Authorities are not to be blamed for their intervention, for it is brought about by the condition of indecision in the general principles of science.<sup>3</sup> However, in usual polemical writings of scientists the same objective detachment is seldom observed.

Now to talk about philosophy, all philosophy except scholasticism would be restive under authority. Religious philosophy has always rejected not only externally constituted social forms of authority but also authority that comes from the records of the past events of supernatural mediations of truths. It is the last that Leonardo da Vinci had in mind when he said that if we use authority we are not using reason but memory. "Dogmatism" has often been used by

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid*, p. 362

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 363

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 363

philosophers as a term of reproach, and "authoritarianism" is positively a bad word with almost all philosophers. Authoritarianism has been rejected by both absolute idealists as well as by empiricists and sceptics and in rejecting it each of these groups of philosophers has laid it at the door of the opposing group. Thus the Indian philosopher Radhakrishnan writes:—

Extremes meet. Authoritarianism implies a sort of scepticism. In affirming that religion should be defended from human reason, that its God should be approached with eyes coloured by faith, that its systems should not be regarded too closely, authoritarianism seems to harbour a secret scepticism. It can have little appeal in an age remarkable for its criticism of creeds of all shades.<sup>1</sup>

On the contrary, Charles Frankel, following the more customary point of view of some contemporary philosophers argues<sup>2</sup> that absolute idealism breeds authoritarianism. Empiricist and pragmatic philosophies marks its rejection of authoritarianism by (1) "a denial that there is anything to appeal to in rational support of belief or moral decisions"; (2) "a denial of hierarchy—or, in general that there is any reason why some should command and others obey"; (3) "a denial that there is any organized institution, or any person, whose decision must be regarded as infallible."<sup>3</sup> According to many, philosophical absolutists from Plato on have been guilty of promoting authoritarianism. The debate between the philosophers of these opposite persuasions has gone on for quite some time and each is trying to blame the other even for the emergence of individuals like Hitler and Stalin.<sup>4</sup> There is no need for us to take sides in this controversy, for it is sufficient for us to note that philosophy in its divergent forms repudiates authoritarianism, or the most extreme method of basing the procedures and conclusions of philosophy on extra-philosophical authority. Even scholastic philosophy, which by nature is more open to regulation by extrinsic authority, is careful so to interpret it that the "authoritarianism" which results is modified by a number of "rational" criteria, so much so external authority is accepted not because it is what it is but because of its "rationality" and the reasonableness of accepting it. The evi-

<sup>1</sup>*An Idealist View of Life*, p. 81

<sup>2</sup>"Freedom, Authority and Orthodoxy," in *Freedom and Authority in Our Time*, Edited by L. Bryson etc.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 420-421

<sup>4</sup>R. M. Weaver in *Ideas Have Consequences* argues that this occurs because of empiricist presuppositions "in the way that conclusions follow from premises."

dence of authority is no more absolute self-evidence but "rational" evidence or uncontradictability.

#### INTRINSIC AUTHORITY IN SCIENCE

Philipp Frank himself recognizes that there is such a thing as an authority that belongs to science; and this could only be an authority that is intrinsic in science. This could be only "a purely scientific criterion." This is partly expressed by what Mr. Elton Trueblood calls "the authority of disciplined insight,"<sup>1</sup> but only partly because in science there is something that transcends "discipline" and "insight" although these are needed. Intrinsic authority in science to my mind includes three elements, which are, (1) the adequacy of methods, (2) the creativity of the scientists engaged in thinking, and (3) the correctness of the logical structure of scientific theories. (To speak of the intrinsic authority of science as the authority of truth itself is merely emotive and in a way is to beg the question, for the subject at issue is the correlation of truth to authority, which is the problematic that raises the whole question.)

It is one of the enduring contributions of Henri Poincaré to show that (1) and (2) are closely inter-related. Discovery and invention follow a logic that is not merely abstract but in many ways remarkably similar to the insights of the poet and the artist. The inalienable need of abstraction in scientific work, although most essential to it, is in many ways ringed around by an aura of imaginative intuition. Poincaré's approach to the problem is conspicuously different from those of several others who speak of the logic of discovery and invention (recall Karl Popper here) as if it is an abstraction that constitutes itself and with no relation to human persons involved in such work. While it is true that the nature and the adequacy of the method is what characterizes science, it is equally true that the method of science does not exist apart from the creative imagination of the scientist who is a human thinker and whose mind is "the instrument of the solution" of problems. Beginning from the choice of facts for each scientific quest, out of a number of facts presented, the scientist is always involved in scientific method as a creative thinker, not as a mere mechanical manipulator.

It is, therefore, the quest of this especial beauty, the sense of the harmony of the cosmos, which makes us choose facts most fitting

<sup>1</sup>*Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 70 ff.



to contribute to this harmony, just as the artist chooses from among the features of his model those which perfect the picture and give it character and life. And we need not fear that this instinctive and unavowed prepossession will turn the scientist aside from the search for the true.<sup>1</sup>

Now the scientist does not choose his facts out of the mere caprice of his curiosity, as Tolstoy had feared, for he has "a guide far other than caprice." By means of this guide the scientist makes a judicious choice out of a hierarchy of facts.

"Method," Poincaré contends, "is precisely the choice of facts; it is needful then to be occupied first with *creating* a method, and many have been imagined and none imposes itself, so that sociology is the science which has the most methods and the fewest results."<sup>2</sup> In the determination of method is seen the specific nature of scientific creativity, and the unique correlation between facts and the thinker who chooses facts. Although scientific method would appear to be most impersonal, which it truly is, at the end of every *general law*, operative in the deductive, the mechanical and industrial applications of scientific method, there stand the creative, personal thinkers, who, as Ernst Mach reportedly said, "spared their successors the trouble of thinking." "It is needful then," observes Poincaré, "to think for those who love not thinking (and most men do not love to think), and, as they are numerous, it is needful that each of our thoughts be as often as possible, and this is why a *law* will be the more precious the *more general* it is."<sup>3</sup>

The *laws* of science do not posit themselves. They arise in the scientist's progress from the regular facts to the irregular. Each law is a complex product of facts, but then in the continuity of scientific tradition each law becomes a simple fact, functioning as material for the formulation of more general laws. "The importance of a fact (or a law, shall we say?) then is measured by its yield, that is to say by the amount of thought it permits us to spare."<sup>4</sup> In the system of laws we have the hierarchy of the intrinsic authority of science. The laws of science are not like the laws of a nation or state, as it has nothing to do with the collective sanctions of a society engaged in self-preservation, but are merely representations of

<sup>1</sup>H. Poincaré, *Science and Method (Foundations of Science)*, p. 367

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 365. Italics mine.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 363. Italics mine.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, p. 371

the way in which facts are to be recognized and knowledge of nature to be advanced. As Mach is quoted as having said, the role of science, or we might say laws of science, is to produce economy of thought. The authority of science thus becomes instrumental to thought, a labour saving device. This is necessary not only for the practical conduct of life but also for the advance of science. If every man and every scientist had to begin from the beginning in everything and to find out for himself even the rules of arithmetic, for example, there would have been no time left for anything else and there of course would have been no progress. Where, then, would nuclear physics and space science have been?

Yet the authority of scientific laws is not to be conceived in any other way than as instrumental to knowledge. Albeit this authority is present in all true and fruitful scientific enterprise as guide in the choice of facts to be investigated. It is not true that science is interested in *all* the facts. As Tolstoy said nobody can know all the facts for they are infinite in number. The fruitfulness and validity of scientific work comes from the selectivity of facts and problems. It is here that the accumulation of laws and facts pertinent to a quest becomes instrumentally but truly authoritative.

One of the peculiar characteristics of the authority of scientific laws is that it is, as it functions in scientific procedures, detachable from the scientific thinkers through whom it came into the human purview. The authority is not personal in the way in which the authority of a work of art depends on the artist, whose spirit is perpetuated through the work, even though sometimes merely anonymously, or in the way in which prophecy depends on the seer. It is truly trans-personal and trans-social. The ancient man who by computing with pebbles creatively discovered the law that 6 times 7 is 42 is not seen in any way needing to survive in the law. The peculiar nature of the correlation of method and the creative thinker in science is that at the point at which the law is discovered the thinker is dissolved in it, and the historical information as to who discovered which law becomes purely parenthetical and even irrelevant. The authority of science is purely *operational* and is valid only within scientific operations, or more exactly within *specific* scientific operations. It is not the authority of the scientist that validates scientific procedures even within scientific operations; much less can it be applied to realms outside. But the contemporary pop-

ulace, of course, sees in the community of scientists (an utterly unauthentic personification of scientific method) the new source of authority, where this authority is applied extrinsically to other realms of human activity. This superstition arises from the notion that science is concerned with something called the Truth, while in fact science knows nothing of it and in no valid operation of science is it seen to have a place. This is because science in social consciousness is not yet really separated from its historical parent, philosophy, while even some otherwise capable scientists, not knowing what science as a total enterprise is all about, permit themselves to speak with "authority" on the subject-matter of philosophy, namely, the Truth, and this often slanted negatively against metaphysics.

Now, the concept of operational authority leads us to the third element of intrinsic authority in science, namely, the logical structure of scientific theories. Carnap asserts that every physical theory consists of three essential parts.<sup>1</sup> These are, the equations of the theory, logical rules and semantic rules. Newton's equation of motion in mechanics and Maxwell's equations of the electro-magnetic field in electromagnetism are examples of the first. These equations contain terms like 'co-ordinate', 'time', 'force', 'magnetic field intensity' etc. Carnap tells us that these equations by themselves are insufficient operators for they give us only the "calculus" of the field of physics, whatever the specific field may be, for instance mechanics in the case of Newton.<sup>2</sup> If the consistency of these equations has to be checked we will need a second "calculus," that of logical rules, including the rules of the specific field in question plus the rules of mathematics. Even then they cannot be treated as a system of physical laws. We need to go further, for no system of statements can be called law unless they are accompanied or contain implicitly a system of definitions. The need of definitions brings us to "semantical rules."<sup>3</sup> Only with their help can we define words like 'distance', 'time', 'moment', 'simultaneously', 'force', 'mass' etc. The semantical rules are the ones that connect the first and second calculi with the words of everyday language, and render them meaningful. There is a built-in precaution in the use of the words of our daily language which makes it possible, then, to check what

<sup>1</sup>*International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, Vol. I, part 3, #23

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, #8; <sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, #4

they refer to by experiments. Thus the semantical rules derived from checkable use of everyday language make it possible for us to check the equations of the theory. Only so, do these equations become physical laws.<sup>1</sup> Bridgman (*Logic of Modern Physics*) calls these "semantic rules" "operational definitions." Frank agrees with Carnap and Bridgman on this. Frank states:

When we know these rules or definitions, we know "the operational meanings" of a term. We must therefore always be aware of the fact that, e.g., Newton's equations of motions by themselves do not contain the theory of motion. Newton's equations with their operational meaning provide us with the theory of motion. There is no way of checking whether the equations of motion by themselves are valid or true or correct. They are only a part of the theory. We can check only whether a system of equations plus the operational definitions is confirmed by a certain experiment or not.<sup>2</sup>

Operational definitions are necessary to check the validity of equations and to turn them into laws. But no checking can be done if we do not assume the validity of the physical laws concerned. Even the concept of the time distance 'one hour' will have to be subjected to this rule. There is no universally standard time-piece that gives the measurement of actual hours. We use actual time-measuring instruments under the assumption of the physical law that there is an invariable relation of proportion between the workings of various time-pieces and clocks, and between various types of them. Operational definitions are such because they are "simple and practical" as distinguished from arbitrary definitions, which are "complicated and impractical." The difference between operational systems and arbitrary or merely conventional systems is that the former aid in checking with facts while the latter do not. The fact that a system is not logically self-contradictory is not enough.

Briefly, an operational definition is "simple and practical" if there are physical laws according to which the numerical result of this definition is identical with the result of other independent operations. Or, in other words, an operational definition is "practical" if it plays an important role in the simplest formulation of valid physical laws.<sup>3</sup>

Thus take the equation of the conservation of energy,  $H + M + E =$

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid*, #24

<sup>2</sup>*International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, Vol. I, No. 7 (Foundations of Physics), #2

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, #3



Constant where  $H$  stands for heat energy,  $M$  for mechanical energy and  $E$  for electromagnetic energy. The old equation, is  $H+M=\text{Constant}$ . But this is deemed insufficient as electromagnetic phenomena are known to come into play. So the new equation  $H+M+E=\text{Constant}$  is meant to define electromagnetic energy symbolized by  $E$ . Frank states:

However, we note that the electromagnetic energy  $E$  has not been defined by our equation of conservation only. There is also a different operational definition of  $E$ . It can be calculated from the electric and magnetic field intensity. Thus we have two operational definitions of  $E$ . To say that both these definitions render one and the same result means to assert the validity of certain physical law. This law gives a practical value to the introduction of the symbol  $E$ .<sup>1</sup>

Even if we add  $U$  (unknown kind energy) to the left side of the equation to make it  $H+M+E+U=\text{Constant}$  we need to define in this double operational way not only  $E$  but also  $U$ . The introduction of the unknown energy  $U$  would be practical only if we knew a second operational definition of  $U$  which is independent of the conservation equation  $H+M+E+U=\text{Constant}$ . Thus the equation, Frank points out, would be a statement of facts, and we would add, operationally authoritative. In olden times physical theories were deemed to contain another type of authority, namely metaphysical authority; this insofar as they were supposed to be causal and explanatory. In the sixteenth century "causal" explanation of phenomena was considered valid if it was based on the authority of Aristotle's philosophy; in the nineteenth century the same was the case if it was based on the authority of Newton's philosophy. Gradually the basis of authority was shifted from metaphysics to commonsense or immediate intuition of nature. All this brought about "the exceptional logical status" of particular types of equations. Belief in commonsense and "intuition" of course is psychologism in science, which is rightly condemned by modern scientists. One of the worst ways in which the principle of non-operational authority is manifested in science is in the entertainment of belief in "self-evidence" or near "self-evidence" of physical laws that have come to be selected from among alternatives. Thus neither Newton's Law of Inertia nor its modern alternative, that which Einstein's general theory of relativity contains, can be selected on the basis of any self-

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid*, #3

evidence. Ultimately the ambiguity as to which of them is right *per se* will remain. Operational definitions do not cut through and do not pretend to be able to cut through the ambiguities. They only provide guidance as to the choice of laws on the basis of the purpose of particular calculations.

One of the things that the rigorous self-interpretation of modern physics and mathematics teaches us is that science knows nothing of a non-operational, that is, universal and absolute, authority of its laws. This kind of authority is simply what popular imagination has given to the method and conclusions of science. On the other hand one of the specific features of the advancement of modern science has been to sharpen the concept of operational validity of laws in given areas. In the name of non-existent universal and absolute authority it has not resigned itself to ambiguities; it has acted as a clear path-finder in specific areas. The operational symbols of a system have no application outside that system. One of the causes of confusion in our age has been the extrapolation of such symbols into areas where there can be no operational definition for those symbols. If the operational definition is so very important even in choosing between alternative laws governing the same physical phenomenon, we can see how very much more vital it is in the mutual relation between one field of science and another. As Frank complains, "The symbols of physics (e.g. waves and particles) have been inserted into the science of biology, sociology, medicine etc., but the operational definitions of the system have been omitted. This means that the physical theories have been applied in a crippled condition."<sup>1</sup> The most discriminating of the physicists have been calling attention to the fallacy of implying the authority of physical laws extraneously to other fields of science. If this is so, there can be nothing but complete irrelevancy when the authority of the new physics or science as a whole is applied extraneously to completely different realms, for instance theology, either constructively or destructively. The conception of authority in science is so completely different from what it is elsewhere that not even an analogy can be built up.

All this we have said with reference to the logical structure of scientific theories, which we stated initially is the third element of

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, IX. Conclusion (p. 73). Also Nefer E. Nagel, *Logic Without Metaphysics*, and my "Science and Symbolism," especially.

authority in science. In fact this is where authority as operational comes in full focus. This is also where we notice how the laws and theories of science, which are really creations of the scientist, transcend and become independent of the creator, so that the authority remains as truly an impersonal one, pertaining, however, only to procedures concerned with further details of the same phenomena about which the particular laws and theories speak. It is one of the rigorous requirements of science that there should be no transference by analogy or otherwise or any extrapolation of authority from one methodological context to another. "The Scientific Method," which in popular imagination and contemporary folklore is apotheosized as the one authoritative channel of knowing "the Truth," would thus seem not to exist *as such* apart from, on the one hand, specific contexts, from specific areas of quest, where it operates and, on the other, apart from the creative scientific thinkers. What we call "*the* Scientific Method" is a form that creative scientific thinkers impose, in obedience to facts, upon the quests concerning those facts. Whatever may be regarded universal or general in *the* scientific method pertains only to the similarity of the way in which facts in different fields are encountered, selected and dealt with; it does not pertain to the laws and theories of specific fields, for they are not universal in the sense of governing all fields of quest. There are physical laws, biological laws, chemical laws; but are there scientific laws pure and simple? Are there scientific theories as such? One of the uncriticized assumptions of our "scientific" age is that such things exist, correlated with the other uncriticized assumption that 'the Scientific Method' is the name for an infallible and authoritative means of knowing "*the* Truth."

#### INTRINSIC AUTHORITY IN PHILOSOPHY

Now we must pass on to the consideration of the nature of intrinsic in philosophy as distinguished from science. In any discussion of the nature of authority in philosophy we are bound to consider the nature of philosophy itself. With regard to this we must affirm that the subject-matter of philosophy is the Truth as such, and therefore the simplest and fundamental definition of philosophy is that it is the quest for the Truth. Philosophy is love of wisdom in the sense that wisdom is knowledge of Truth. Thus in short the intrinsic authority of philosophy is authority of the Truth. This is

no vain platitude because without the Truth as its subject-matter there can be no reason for the existence of philosophy. Yet what is the Truth? Philosophy does not answer the question; it only raises it. It is the only discipline that raises it and can validly raise the question. That is its business. Every "final" answer it gives to this question is such that it can be subjected to further questioning. The inconclusiveness of philosophy consists not in the fact that, as in science, it moves from known truths to unknown but that it is constantly compelled to open itself to new approaches to the Truth. It is not a movement that can cover any "distance," for it is simply an unceasing search within itself, where it builds and rebuilds worlds. Yet it is this "useless" activity that sustains all other "useful" activities; it underlies them all, for it is that ultimate "uselessness" which validates and authenticates all "usefulness." The eternal elusiveness of the Truth is the power that makes all truths tractable and worth tracking down. It is itself intractable for it is equally implied in the denials and the affirmations of it. At no point can philosophy as the search for the Truth cease to be, short of the point where man ceases to be man.

Now then, what is the authority of the Truth as it functions in human activities? We might say that it validates philosophy explicitly and validates all other quests implicitly. The authority of Truth, it becomes evident, unlike the intrinsic authority of science, is not operational. You can verify truths operationally but you cannot so verify the Truth. Authority in philosophy turns out to be much less objective. As the late Professor William P. Montague<sup>1</sup> pointed out, there is in Philosophy that which is inalienably human, a vision about that which transcends the human. Philosophy cannot easily be separated from the persons and community of persons that create and sustain it. It is this that makes tradition or history an important element in Philosophy. The History of Philosophy is important to philosophy in a way The History of Science is not important to Science. As Gustave Mueller<sup>2</sup> has said, philosophy is to be found in its history and nowhere else. The thought of the pre-Socratics and the Vedic thinkers is still of lively interest to us. In no sense can we claim that contemporary philosophical thought has su-

<sup>1</sup>"Philosophy as Vision," (*International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. XLIV, No. 1, October, 1933).

<sup>2</sup>Dialectic



perseded previous philosophies. There is no "progress" in philosophy as in science such that the philosophy at a particular point may be thought to be the completion and culmination of all that went before. That to which the concepts 'completion' and 'culmination' refer is the history of philosophy from which new thoughts constantly shoot forth and return enrichingly. Complementary to the importance that history or tradition holds in philosophy is the importance of absolutely new beginning that each individual has to make to be a philosopher. Every philosopher has to consider every problem from "scratch," which he does in reference to the History of Philosophy. This is the paradox. There is no point of culmination from which he can take off with the complacent certainty that the questions thus far have been settled.

Thus the intrinsic authority of the Truth concretely manifests itself to the philosopher not as the fundamental universal challenge to thought but as the problematics that the History of Philosophy presents, for the Truth comes to him concretely through history. Thus it turns out that the intrinsic authority of Truth in Philosophy is the authority of history, of tradition, but this authority does not come to anyone as a positive absolute but only as problematical and as educative. As Walter Lippman has said, such authority is our indispensable guide in our passage from apprenticeship to maturity, which is a treacherous road.<sup>1</sup> Indian philosophy would call it *pramāṇa*. Brand Blanchard is right when he says that originality "lies more in our capacity to learn than in eccentricity of self-will."<sup>2</sup> Certainly this is even more true in the specific philosophical realm of ethics than in others, as Blanchard points out, for the simple reason, one assumes, that thought in that realm has far more practical consequences than in others.

Yet at no place is originality and the necessity to begin anew from the root questions made irrelevant even in ethics. Else, authority runs the danger of becoming extrinsic, although we must concede that practical considerations make it necessary for intrinsic authority in Ethics to be somewhat governed by extrinsic authority especially as it exists in objectivized traditions, institutions, social norms etc. In fact this is one of the areas where the dialectic between freedom and authority which we mentioned in the begin-

<sup>1</sup>*Book of Readings*, No. 4, "The Passage to Maturity" (W. Lippman)

<sup>2</sup>*Preface to Philosophy*, W. Hocking etc., p. 143

ning is heavily felt, for each perceptibly loses its meaning without the other. This is even more obvious in Law and Politics. But the tension between freedom and authority that exists in the dialectical situation becomes creative, in the sense that a shift takes place from the extrinsic to the intrinsic at the point where persons actualize both freedom and authority, although still external, by resolution, so that freedom takes the shape of an authority that persons impose on themselves in terms of *obedience*, rather than acquiescence or conformity. This is where conscience comes in; and conscience is not only a matter of inward witness but also one of the actualization of an objective authority as a subjective one. So to actualize is not yet freedom in the absolute sense but freedom within the dialectical situation. Absolute freedom knows no dichotomy with authority and it exists only in the state of salvation in the transcendent or eschatological sense.

#### AN ADDITIONAL CONCLUDING REMARK

There is one very general observation that may be made, which affects authority, intrinsic authority that is, not only in science and philosophy but in all fields of human activity and concern. This is about the principle of relevancy. Relevancy is a very essential dimension of authority; it is one of its vital ingredients. Every human activity and concern, not only philosophy or science, can degenerate internally, which will spell also the disintegration of man himself. It is worth pondering on the question of relevancy, which we all assume so easily. He who does not assume it is a complete cynic, and the cynic is often in an unenviably self-contradictory position, for he assumes uncritically the relevancy only of his cynicism. Yet even in his obviously self-contradictory position he challenges all, the scientist and the philosopher included, to consider the relevancy of their disciplines. We all do well to accept relevancy of our particular activities, but we must be led from here to higher and universal dimensions. Relevancy tacitly justifies the authority which is the transcendent source and judge of other authority.





Helen M. Khoobyar



# REVELATION IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Helen M. Khoobyar

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How can Christian education be established on a sound theological basis, yet retain the values and insights of the religious education movement? The purpose of this article is to describe three developments in Christian education that have been influenced by contemporary theology, and accept for their norm a theological understanding of the revelation in Jesus Christ which is the foundation of the Church. Each development includes elements of all three but each adopts a somewhat different way of interpreting the Christian faith, and emphasizes a particular way of "getting at" the process of Christian education. The limitations of this article are due to the complexity of the subject at the present state of Christian education; it would need continuous study to arrive at a valid analysis.

## I

### FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The development of religious education as a full-scale movement is usually traced to the turn of the present century. Prior to this time, churches tended to confine their program to Sunday-School work largely led and controlled by laymen. In 1922, the International Council of Religious Education (I.C.R.E.) was organized. At this time both lay and professional, denominational and inter-

denominational, interests were combined to meet the needs of churches and councils.<sup>1</sup> The I.C.R.E. under the influence of William C. Bower of the University of Chicago, and George A. Coe of Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary (both committed to an empirical rather than a dogmatic approach to religious education) became too closely allied with the scientific method of general education. At this time the findings of educational psychology, sociology, child development and cultural anthropology helped religious education make great advances in methodology and come to a deeper appreciation of the role of the pupil in learning. In an effort to make the teaching-learning process more effective and personal, and social conduct more vital, verbalization was replaced by experience, and formal and transmissive teaching with experimental and functional method. Thus, during the first forty years of this century under the impact of Social Gospel and experimental education, emphasis came to be placed upon "experience in preference to tradition, experimentation rather than revelation, discovery in preference to indoctrination, growth instead of dogma, creativity instead of transmission, self-reliance rather than authority; in sum, the science of man instead of the science of God (theology)."<sup>2</sup>

An important publication in 1940 was *Can Religious Education Be Christian?* by Harrison Elliott of Union Theological Seminary. He believed that religious education, to be Christian, must be founded upon an experimental ground. He wrote, "there is no one true interpretation of the Christian religion which is its function to transmit. Rather, religious education is an enterprise in which historical experience and conceptions are utilized in a process by which individuals and groups come to experiences and convictions which are meaningful for today."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, "It is only through such a process that God becomes known or that an experience of God is achieved."<sup>4</sup> In other words, Elliott defined Christian faith in terms of experience and the educational process as the process through which God chooses to reveal Himself.

Granted that these religious educators rejected traditional theology as too narrow and too restrictive, their education was not devoid of theology. It was hoped that under guidance the growing person would be led to God through Christian living. The growth

process had its goal in Christlikeness and the religious tradition was brought to bear upon the learner's present experience.

During the succeeding years, religious education has fought to preserve its pragmatism and empiricism against the claims of "neo-orthodoxy." In the meanwhile, the I.C.R.E. continued to exist, often expanding its educational emphases, until 1950 when it merged with other denominational agencies in the National Council of Churches. This meant that religious educators began to be concerned with religious education as church education.

Another significant event in 1955 was the publication of *The Gift of Power* by Lewis J. Sherrill of Union Theological Seminary. Sherrill replaced experimentation with revelation as the core of Christian education. He wrote, "the scene of Christian education is the Christian community as a *koinonia* in which both men and God participate in an intricate web of relationships."<sup>5</sup>

These events challenged religious educators to become concerned with Christian education and prompted the curriculum committee of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches to use those educational procedures that were more consistent with the distinctive message of the church. Biblical theology, theological developments, and findings of depth psychology hastened the inevitable re-evaluation of Christian nurture. Now Christian educators and curriculum writers are striving to arrive at an understanding of Christian nurture consistent with the biblical view, the newer understandings of the ministry of the church and the sobering evaluations of human nature. Wesner Fallaw of Andover Newton Theological School believes that our concern is not religious education, but church education and that a new statement of principles is needed to guide Christian nurture in the churches.<sup>6</sup>

## II

### CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

When one considers religious education as church education, one must conclude that the nature and function of Christian education is determined by the church, a historical fellowship of persons bearing witness to faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Since the Bible is the record of this revelation, Christian education more fully must accept its Gospel message as the norm of faith and life.

In the following pages we shall examine three developments which stand as important movements in Christian education.

#### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND BIBLICAL FAITH

The theological revolution in biblical scholarship of the past thirty years has had profound implication for the rediscovery of the Bible in Christian education. Despite a wide variety of approaches to the Bible, there is increasing agreement concerning its authority. The Scriptures are used in varying degrees of flexibility. Sherrill uses the Bible as a "resource." He writes, "The central purpose of using the Bible in Christian education is to *prepare the way for men to perceive God and respond to him in the present. We may call this the purpose of the continuing encounter.*"<sup>7</sup> James D. Smart of Union Theological Seminary places a heavier emphasis on the Bible as bearing the record of revelation. He presents the Bible "as the record of revelation that is unique in our world."<sup>8</sup> He believes that Christian education must aim beyond transmitting of information about the Bible and its contents. "The goal of the Bible study, therefore, is that they may know in all his fullness the God who is revealed in the Bible, and may so understand all their life in the light of his presence that not only their words and actions but their very existence will be, moment by moment, a living witness to the reality of God."<sup>9</sup>

This re-emphasis of the authority of the Scripture is not a reassertion of traditional supernatural biblical authority, with an infallible text, although some, in their enthusiasm, have fallen easily into the old uncritical, proof-texting ways. The emphasis comes out of a concern for the integrity of the Christian faith amid the dangers of contemporary culture and out of a concern for the uniqueness of its witness to God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

The affirmation of the absoluteness and exclusiveness of the biblical witness to God's grace in Christ finds expression in the theology of Karl Barth who reaffirms the faith of the Reformers, especially of Luther and Calvin. *Christian Faith and Life Curriculum* of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., shows direct influence of Barthian theology. It is founded on the "redemptive knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, as he is presented to us in Scripture, and as Scripture is proclaimed, interpreted, and believed in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."<sup>10</sup> Here we have



the Reformation tradition directing the church to begin with Scripture.

In Christian education biblical theology tries to escape the legalism and literalism of traditional interpretation of scriptural authority by emphasizing the personal character of the revelation in Jesus Christ and the necessity of the response of faith to the word of God. The Bible is taken seriously in terms of what it says rather than in terms of what the educators would find it convenient for the Bible to say. This brings us to the crucial problem of the use of the Bible with children. On one hand one is faced with learners of immature development who have little or no sense of time and space. On the other hand one recognizes that the Bible, from the beginning to end, is an adult book and its subject matter is historically oriental and theologically strange to a child.

In facing this problem grading becomes a necessity. Grading means omitting sections which in terms of a young child's understanding are better studied later. "Grading means simply that we do not try to make the child take any step in his pilgrimage into the Bible until he is ready for it. It requires an abandonment of the attitude that the child will be benefited by the mere quantity of the Bible with which he is familiar. The purpose of instructing the child in the Scriptures is not just that he may know the Scriptures, but that he may have faith in God as he is revealed in the Scriptures."<sup>11</sup>

In selecting and grading one may go a step further and question the value of Old Testament with Primary children. The reply is that there are stories in the Old Testament that the "primaries can in their limited way understand and should be exposed to as part of the heritage of Christian community. God in His own time and His own way reveals His will, even to the primaries."<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, "In our enforced selectivity we must conscientiously guard against fragmenting the Scripture in such a way as to destroy their essential theological unity."<sup>13</sup>

In Biblical theology Jesus Christ is the center and is known only in the response of faith. The important fact therefore, is who Jesus Christ *is* and what Jesus Christ *does* (not what Jesus is and what Jesus does). This means "Jesus of history and Christ of faith" are never separated at any age level. It is not sufficient to represent Jesus as a supremely good man or as a moral hero. Furthermore,

the purpose is not merely to impart a body of purely factual information. In presenting Jesus Christ in his earthly career the child will be conscious of a person absolutely unique and even the youngest ones should have an awareness that "God was in Christ." The meaning of what he did will point to who and what Christ is. His teachings are not considered simply as ethical rules for the good life. They must be related to the situations in which they were spoken, and more important, to the Person who commands the believer's obedience and loyalty because he is the Son of God.<sup>14</sup> One may ask, "Does this make Jesus Christ and God one and the same in the mind of the child?" The answer is, "Christian faith sees in Christ one who was human as we are, and yet was God. . . . The greatest mystery in the world is that Jesus Christ was no less a man for being God, and no less God for being a man."<sup>15</sup> In the mind of the child Jesus Christ "will stand forth as the humble carpenter of Galilee in whom Almighty God revealed his very self."<sup>16</sup>

Historical or critical study is used as a tool. The Biblical authority is not dependent on any theory of authorship. For some purposes it is important to ask whether the parable of the Prodigal Son was or was not actually spoken by Jesus. But the authority one finds in such utterances does not rest upon the answer to that question. They possess inherent truth which was apprehended by the believing community so passionately that their memory makes the believer a sharer in that experience. Furthermore, it is the Holy Spirit that gives the Scripture meaning. The truth and authority of the Bible "is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts" (Ch. I, Sec. V. *Westminster Confession of Faith*).

How does this approach "meet the needs" of young people? The answer is, "such an approach is not concerned with immediate application. It does not require such questions as, 'How can I get along in school?' or 'How can I use the Bible to help me succeed?' Rather it strikes at and opens up much deeper questions. It deals with the central relationship of the growing person's life which almost no one else in the world is going to point out to him."<sup>16</sup> As they study the Bible they ask questions, "How does God speak to me?" "Do you have to be good before God works through you?" "What kind of person does God use?" Or, "This means me!"<sup>18</sup>

From the foregoing discussion one might conclude that all Chris-

tian thought and life rests upon the content of the Bible. Teaching becomes mere instruction; proclamation is substituted for nurture; transmission of dogma replaces exploration and quest; indoctrination finds preference to discovery; the past is substituted for the present. In answer to this challenge, Smart writes, "A curriculum committed to the principle that to know God through Jesus Christ and to become Christ's disciple in the fellowship of his church is the aim of Christian education to take the Scriptures and questions of doctrine with seriousness, and runs the risk always of doing it in an educationally ineffective way."<sup>19</sup> Fallaw believes that "these dangers can be avoided and that full consideration can be given to individual and corporate need to experience of God in the Person of Christ. Most assuredly that Word of God made flesh—the Christ—rather than simply the words of God in the Book, is both the point of departure and the continuing concern of church education."<sup>20</sup>

#### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

The uniqueness and value of persons and their relationships have led many educators to think of Christian education in terms of personal relationships. This means, "Christian education must be personal; it must take place in a personal encounter *and, only secondarily, is it transmissive.*"<sup>21</sup>

This type of approach finds expression in *Man's Need and God's Action* by Reuel Howe, Director of Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies at Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He also had a leading role in the development of The Seabury Series of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Howe is strongly influenced by Martin Buber's "I-Thou" relationship and acknowledges his indebtedness to Tillich's framework of thought.<sup>22</sup> He points out that the role of the teacher is the role of the "Thou" which is to reveal the meaning of existence to the pupil. Likewise, the pupil is a "Thou" and has also the role of revealing the meaning of existence to the teacher. This "I-Thou" relationship is possible in a relationship of acceptance and one can experience acceptance through personal encounter only. This means the teacher's first responsibility, his act of love, is to be open to the pupil as learner. He is alert to the meanings his pupil brings to the relationship and to the meaninglessness that imprisons him. The true teacher listens to the questions asked and helps the

learner to ask better and deeper questions, thus drawing him nearer to the deeper answers. He listens to his pupil, too, because he knows that he may learn from him. He becomes a learner because the pupil has become a teacher. In such relationship the pupil's trust is awakened and his being is opened to the power of the Eternal Thou speaking through the "I-Thou" of the teacher-pupil relationship. He moves from basic trust as he has experienced it in his human relationship to faith in God who is the source of his being, therefore his understanding of "I believe in God" becomes restricted or enhanced by the meaning he brings out of his life.

Howe points out further that I cannot accept myself and my student who demands acceptance unless I accept that I am accepted by God. The message of the Gospel is that God accepts us and releases in us a power that makes it possible to accept ourself and others. The question is, "How does one experience this acceptance and how does God express it?" Howe indicates that we experience acceptance through personal encounter only. God's acceptance of us is communicated by the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of the church in and through our acceptance of each other. This by no means limits God's power of acceptance. God is able and can transcend our limitations and do in and through us what we ourselves are completely unable to do. God acts in any way He wants, but He wants to act through our broken and limited ability. In the last analysis, "the acceptance of God, *pointed to* through human acceptance, exceeds anything that human acceptance can ever convey. But it can only be pointed to, seen and responded to by faith."<sup>23</sup>

Thus, there is a language of relationships and a language of words. "The content of our faith was born of God's action and man's response—a divine-human encounter. It is possible, however, to reduce it to subject matter and substitute the transmission of subject matter for the encounter, with the assumption that it will accomplish the same purpose (although it cannot, it never has, and it never will). Actually, the relations of encounter and transmission are complementary. Both are needed. The Church as a 'tradition-bearing community' contains both poles and does not want to subordinate one to the other. When the content of the tradition is lost, the meaning of encounter is lost, and in the end even encounter itself. And when encounter is lost, tradition becomes idolatrous and sterile. Both are necessary to the faith community, and



both are dangerous and meaningless if separated. And Christian teaching must depend upon both."<sup>24</sup>

The goals and practices of the group life or group dynamics movements as adapted for Christian education in the program of the Episcopal Church incorporate elements of "I-Thou" dimension. In these small intimate groups persons become aware of the importance of acceptance of each other before they are able to speak as "I" to "Thou" and hear as "I" and "Thou."

#### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN CORRELATION WITH ULTIMATE QUESTIONS

There are educators who are concerned with the relevance of the Gospel to the deep questions, anxieties, and struggles that arise out of human existence. Here one must go beyond the specific content of Tillich's theology and see the implications of his method of correlation for Christian education. Tillich says, "The method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence."<sup>25</sup> This means man asks the meaning of his own existence—of what it means to be, as over against not to be. When man asks ultimate questions, he opens his life to God's revelation of Himself. The message of the Christian Gospel comes as an answer and overcomes the threat of non-being. Thus, human need and divine revelation find their correlation in their very nature.

In keeping in mind, "Man cannot receive an answer to a question he has not asked," there are two consequences which have special implications in Christian education.

First, Christian education must draw out or dig beneath the surface to discover the underlying anxieties, fears, and hopes which engage the person at every stage of his growth. "It is ironic," says Fallaw, "that our generation has been so concerned to avoid engendering fears in children that they have left them in the worst plight of anxiety, an anxiety that is perhaps as intense and poignant as that of adults."<sup>26</sup>

Those who are sensitive to the behavior and expression of children and youth are aware of their anxieties, fears, and feelings of insecurity. These feelings arise through a variety of experiential structures that are potentially revelatory such as the natural world and social relationships. One of the earliest facts that confronts the child is death. Early, too, appear questions and problems of life

that show conflict between hate and love, acceptance and rejection, joy and sorrow. At the various stages of growth there are feelings that raise questions regarding the meaning of life, its purposes and goals. It is to these questions it is believed that Christian education should direct its attention and "prepare the way" to God's revelation of Himself.

Second, every existential question actually involves an answer that is presupposed. This is the other side of educational process that follows the aspect of the "method of correlation." God is in every way the answer to all that man asks concerning himself and his situation. This means, the answers to our ultimate concern do not come from our experience. They are given. The answer is the word of God that comes to us from outside the existential scene and can be received only by faith. The message of revelation, presupposed in the existential questions, is received, and interpreted through the medium of experience, but it is not created by experience.

The task of Christian education therefore, is to "prepare the way" for the hearing and receiving the Gospel message. But this is not solely dependent upon human efforts and educational skills and methods. God's revelation of Himself is an act of His grace and the teacher will depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

While The Seabury Series of the Protestant Episcopal Church leans heavily on the language of relationship, it tries to correlate its answers with existential questions. An attempt is made to draw out questions related to the life situation of children and youth. Attention is given to concrete experiences. Juniors are encouraged to ask questions of what is right and what is wrong. Junior High students wrestle with questions of "Why should I obey?" "Why should I believe?" "Why should I go to Church?" Answers to these questions come from the resources of the Gospel message and Church tradition. But this "method" does not imply the keeping of the answer and the question in two separate categories. Rather, the Scripture and the Church tradition help to raise existential questions. It is of surprise to some educators to know that the curriculum for the third grade is parts of the Book of Common Prayer. These parts explain about Morning Prayer and Holy Communion. They also tell about the Church Year and its Seasons.

In this discussion we have seen the relevance of revelation for

Christian education. Sherrill writes, "The relevance of revelation lies in the fact that the disclosure fits the need. It is Self meeting self. It is the disclosure of the profound Selfhood in God which eventually is the deepest mystery of our universe. But it is not a disclosure into a vacuum. It is a disclosure from God which matches the need in the existing self of man, and can call forth the capacities of that self."<sup>27</sup>

### III

#### GENERAL REMARKS

1. I believe Biblical faith for Christian education must have a scholarship that is believing as well as critical. It must be critical in order not to fall prey to dogmatism and "sophisticated fundamentalism." History should not be used as Richard R. Niebuhr indicates in a "non-historical" sense. There are certain conclusions which command a very wide consensus of expert opinion and these should be respected. For instance, in studying the life and teachings of Jesus we still go to the Synoptics to recover the oldest traditions. And the more deeply one studies them, the more confident one feels that in these we are in a closer touch with the faith of the early community.

Probably a great deal of research needs to be done to discover unexpected Biblical materials that are more helpful to children than the stories conventionally told. Furthermore, Christian education must take religious symbolism more seriously and learn to interpret it in terms related to contemporary experience.

2. Acceptance in Christian education means all that Howe so ably describes in his book. But acceptance also means the acceptance of life as it is. There is the pain, harshness and mystery of human conditions that should be faced courageously. The child needs the assurance of trust, love and acceptance, but he also needs the beginning of the courage to face the world as it is. Christian education should take the findings of child guidance laboratories seriously.

3. It seems the approach of "I-Thou" in the personal encounter tries to solve the problem too easily. One is impressed with the results of small group discussions and at the same time with the difficulty of this relationship. How long would it take a class of twenty

or more junior high or senior high students to come to the place where the members could speak to one another out of the very depth of their being? It should be said however, that Ross Snyder has been quite successful in using this "dialogical" method.

4. Because of the seriousness of our faith and of our concern for the child, Christian education must take the findings of depth psychology, sociology and child guidance seriously, but always return to Christian faith for correction and evaluation.

In conclusion let us refuse to see a gap between the task of Christian education and the task of Christian theology. Let us always hold them together, for the task of theology is to say what we mean by the Christian faith, and the task of Christian education is to enable ourselves and others to enter more deeply into the meaning of the Christian faith and the Christian life.

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William L. Bradley

# THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST

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## I

The Pharisees were understandably offended by Jesus' seeming irreverence in breaking Sabbath laws believed to have been delivered to Moses on Mt. Sinai. He could have waited until sundown to feed his hungry disciples and heat the chronically ill. But Jesus did not recognize the validity of their presuppositions. Religious law required the ceremonial washing of the hands before eating, on the theory that sin is something external which can be washed away by externalized ritual. Jesus taught that it was not impure food but unclean thoughts that made men sinful.

Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.<sup>1</sup>

Man's real problem, accordingly, is himself. Our separation from Reality has taken place within the Self, which exists in isolation from God and other men because of an exile self-imposed. "This above all, to thine own self be true:" how lofty a sentiment this is, and how impossible of accomplishment! To suppose that fidelity to one's true self will relieve one of the problem of guilt is to be blind to the very difficulty which creates guilt: self-alienation, self-aggrandisement, self-centeredness—pride.

If this analysis is correct, then man's fundamental problem, which constitutes the crisis of his existence, lies in the inward dimensions of his spirit, and not in an alien universe. "Know Thyself" accordingly becomes an imperative commandment, as Socrates so doggedly proclaimed. But if to know oneself inevitably leads to such awareness as to cause despair, then what hope is there? How can the blind lead the blind; how can that which is evil bring forth goodness?

The heart of the problem is that the self, which would love mercy and walk justly, remains the most imposing obstacle to the good life. Whereas we seek in our hearts to be good, loyal, steadfast, devoted children of God, we find ourselves incapable of that goodness because of something within that blocks the way. For this reason the problem of our deepest spiritual existence lies in the fact that what seems most clearly necessary—the change of heart from selfishness to altruism—is the least possible of accomplishment.

This is why man requires of and for himself some form of personal atonement. Aware of his failure at the very center of his being, man must find a way of paying the penalty for his inability to make good that failure. In those ambiguous situations which characterize all human existence, man discovers his ability to recognize his guilt and his inability to do anything to change himself. That which makes him man—the power of self-transcendence—does not enable him to be a superman with the power of self-transformation. And so in his anxiety he cries out to God,

We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;  
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;  
and there is no health in us.

Something *has to be done* by the guilty one in order to make possible the transformation of human existence. We feel this as strongly in personal relationships as in religion, of course. All can recall with shame instances in our own lives when we sought by lavish gifts or displays of affection to atone for unfaithful or disloyal motives within our hearts. Surface demonstrations of love often overlaid contradictory sentiments with which the conscience humiliates us. Our integrity is shattered by such self-revelations, however, and so we feel that we have become corrupted and unworthy of that which is good. We drive ourselves to make up for our own disloyalty; we seek somehow to atone.



In reaction to chaotic despair men seek desperately to atone for the guilt they find within themselves. An act of atonement, arising spontaneously from the heart, involving the sacrifice of something greatly prized, alone will satisfy the conscience, whether it be individual or collective. Jesus sees this clearly, and because He forces men to come to terms with themselves at the deepest level of their being, he stirs up our hopes on the one hand, and our animosities on the other.

## II

How does Christ fit into this picture, and by what manner of justification can Christianity claim that His life and death are crucial to all mankind? The answers which we shall attempt to develop will necessarily be our own, and will take the form of philosophical argument rather than confession of faith. This means that the disadvantages of a philosophical approach will be unavoidable, but we take that risk intentionally because we believe that men today require an answer in contemporary thought-forms rather than in traditional formulas which unfortunately have lost their meaning for so many today.

In order to underscore the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, let us restate the case for religion. Religion is flourishing in a scientific age despite predictions to the contrary. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that man is religious because of need for a more meaningful existence than the one he knows: a need which is felt to be a result of something man has done to produce a cleavage between himself and Reality. We maintained that men have always felt this way about life and have held themselves responsible for their plight. Because of this they have sought to discover some means of spiritual rebirth. In his religions man has experienced a sense of fulfillment denied those without faith, and this in turn has entailed two components. The one is the belief that something can be done to restore man to Reality, and that man can do it. The other is that God has revealed to man valid means of restoration. The ancient rites of sacrifice combine both these ingredients, we hold, and it is this which gives them whatever efficacy they may have. The Old Testament ceremonies were reinterpreted by Christians in terms of the life and death of Christ.

Atonement is a specifically human problem, and is therefore one which is enacted in that dimension of existence which man alone can share with God. One enters this dimension through inwardness, an insight shared by the great teachers of every major faith.

However, to turn inward is to begin upon a dangerous enterprise, for if it is pursued to its logical conclusion, inwardness can lead a man to devastating despair. We see how true this is by the difference between our natural attitude toward organic disease and mental illness. The former is respectable, and we are not ashamed, for example, to confess that we have been stricken by a virus. Mental illness, on the other hand, remains acutely embarrassing; none of us wishes to admit that there is something wrong with his mind. To grant this would be to confess a derangement at the center of our being, and this we refuse to do unless we are truly desperate.

Now the distinctiveness of Christ lies in the fact that he alone among the great teachers of history brings men face to face with human existence as it really is. In other cases, no matter how penetrating the discernment of the human predicament, the teacher turns off the path of inwardness before he has reached the point of no return that leads to self-enlightenment. Jesus was recognized as one who spoke with authority,<sup>2</sup> and this authority consisted in his ability to probe to the depths of human suffering and guilt and successfully to diagnose the cause.

Compare, for example, Jesus' diagnosis of evil with that of the great seers of other faiths. The nameless authors of the Upanishads looked upon creation as the source of evil. Buddha found suffering to be caused by any object of desire. Socrates believed that anything which changes due to space and time is a source of evil, and that the body, which perishes, is the prison of the soul, which is immortal and unchangeable. Confucius saw evil to lie in an absence of virtue, wherein men no longer did things as their ancestors had done. Lao-tzu thought that evil is due to civilization, sophistication, and the complexity of human culture. The Hebrew prophets ascribed evil to men's unrighteous, unfaithful, unjust deeds toward man and God.

In all these cases the trouble is seen to lie in something exterior to self: a world which is eternally imperfectible, an existence which is ultimately illusory, a way of life which is improper or unrighteous, a series of actions which are unjust. And because the diagno-

sis is externalized—and therefore incomplete—the prescribed solution is insufficient to our desperate need for redemption at the very heart of our being. Why *is* man cut off from God? Is it because of an environment tinged with evil, or a wretched social order he has inherited from his guilty ancestors, or a streak of original sin transmitted through the genes? If so, how can man be responsible for his separation from God? How then can man hold God guiltless, and insist because of a censorious conscience that he stands convicted before a Holy God?

Perhaps it is because these questions must be asked that so many civilizations have turned away from this problem in a kind of fatalistic despair in which it is believed that even the gods are ruled by Fate—that negative, all-powerful force which leads all creation to its doom.

With Jesus the diagnosis is different. Calling men to inwardness, as others have done, calling men to turn away from the lures of a salvation which annihilates the self by externality, he yet brings man face to face with himself as he really is. One might state it in this way: whereas other seers have led men on a part of “the way” to Reality, a way which is the same for every faith, Jesus alone leads men to the very end of this path. He brings men right to the heart of their problem. The teachings of Jesus have an eternal relevance which makes them always contemporary, unceasingly urgent, universally true, and yet related to each person’s peculiar situation. He enables—nay forces—an individual to realize that the trouble in his life can be met and mastered only within himself, for the real difficulties, over which we exercise control, are the specifically human ones.

Whereas formerly it had been thought possible for men to live in fellowship with God by means of the strict observance of ceremonial laws (what the psychoanalyst Theodor Reik, terms “repetition compulsions”<sup>3</sup>), actual experience had demonstrated the inadequacy of such techniques. Jesus turns us away from such externalized controls and directs us upon the inner tensions which lie at the center of our alienation from God. Furthermore, although it is Christ Who leads us, it is we who make the self-discovery through Him. That is to say: He—an outsider—does not tell us what kind of people we really are, but He enables us to make this discovery for

ourselves. For this reason there is no escaping responsibility for our separation from God and neighbor.

Just how does Jesus succeed in this? He does it through His ability to diagnose the cause of human sinfulness. Just as a person who is emotionally disturbed cannot be helped until he begins to comprehend what it is within himself that is tearing his personality apart, so we cannot be restored from our self-imposed exile from God until we have been led to understand and accept that cause within ourselves that underlies the problem. Jesus brings men to such self-awareness, such self-diagnosis. Through Him we come to grips with those rebellious, ambivalent powers at war within us.

This constitutes His authority over us. He knows us as we truly are; and when we place our confidence in Him we come to see—only too distinctly—the truth that was His from the very beginning. Then we discover that He who understands our weakness as well as our strength has the power of life and death over our souls. With a word He can penetrate our protective armor of pride and respectability. If we but allow Him he can reconstitute the very center of our being. And so, because we recognize this power in Him we both long for and dread His healing words.

There are four ways in which Christ relates Himself to human existence. The first of these is particularity, or personal relevance. Jesus speaks not in abstractions but in specific ways. He speaks not only to the other fellow, but to me as well, and to both of us at the same time. Anyone who takes Christ seriously knows that His parables are as true for us as for the people of Palestine, as true for the middle class as for the wealthy, as true for the devout as for the atheistic. The second way in which Christ touches upon existence is in respect to motivation. He appeals to the will and calls upon us to accept responsibility for our destiny. We must decide our fate by choosing for the Kingdom or against it. We must choose between God and the substitutes for God that we find in our daily life. Thirdly, Christ addresses us in terms of ultimacy. The decisions we are called upon to make are matters of life and death, not only for the present, but for eternity as well. Our choices are crucial ones, more serious than any of the day-to-day decisions which consume most of our time. Finally, Christ calls into question our fundamental loyalty—our faith. He evokes our allegiance in such a way



that men must finally choose between serving Him or serving their own self-interest.

Jesus' ministry is remarkable for the way in which His teachings continue to have a universal significance despite the passage of two millenia. While nations have come and gone, and the languages of men have varied, Jesus' parables are as relevant today as they ever were. Tillich has stated that the thing that makes the revelation of Jesus as the Christ ultimate is this combination of universal validity and particular relevance.<sup>4</sup> The parables have a unique quality in this respect. Contrast the intentionally abstract style of Plato's Dialogues, for instance, with the concreteness of a parable. Plato makes his dialogues concrete by putting the words into the mouths of actual people, but the truths for which they search are necessarily abstract and impersonal. In Jesus' parables the truths themselves are immediate and personal.

Here is a graphic illustration of the difference between Socrates and Jesus. "Know thyself," for Socrates meant, "know thy mind, which alone is able to reflect upon changing Truth." For Jesus it meant, "Know thy heart." As a contemporary philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, is fond of saying, there is a difference between having the truth and being the truth.<sup>5</sup> It is in the latter sense that Jesus addresses men by His parables. The stories of the rich fool who hoarded his wealth only to die before he could use it, the prodigal son, and the pharisee and publican<sup>6</sup> are typical examples of the way in which Jesus' teachings, related to specific situations in His own ministry, continue to speak directly to everyone who reads them today.

So too does He affect our motivation. There is a sharpness in His words that cuts through the superficial layers of our behavior to the heart of the truth within us. Face to face with Him we are brought to terms with the most intimate, personal, undeniable truth about ourselves. No longer can we externalize our behavior in such a way as to escape responsibility for our masked intentions. For while the law constrains only our actions, Christ leads us to question the deep purposes and desires which lie below the surface. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart."<sup>7</sup> "Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Jesus also calls upon us to take seriously the ultimate problem of our destiny. We are required to make a choice for the Kingdom of God. Here again the parable of the rich fool is relevant. Certainly each of us knows well enough the difficulty of serving our long-range interests when immediate pleasures and comforts beckon. What could be more relevant and of greater ultimacy than Jesus' warning, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."<sup>9</sup>

Finally, He calls for our loyalty, our faith. One of the most impressive pictures we have of Jesus in the gospels is that of a man who evinces an almost childlike faith. At the beginning of His ministry men leave their tasks to become His disciples. By faith are the people cured of illness: a woman with a hemorrhage is healed by her own faith, but the daughter of Jairus and the servant of a centurion are made well by the faith of others.<sup>10</sup> Such faith is not dead today. It is repeated in every generation, and the history of the Church is marked by the loyal acceptance of Christ by men like Paul, Augustine, Luther, and Wesley.

This faith comes not through the easy acceptance of what seems to be the highest good. Our highest good is not always what we desire—at least, not now. Augustine knew this well when he prayed God to release him from his bondage to sensuality, but not yet.<sup>11</sup> When Christ brings us face to face with Self, He does so only to bring us to the matrix of a deadly inner conflict. It would be more pleasant to accept the truth that is abstract and removed from us. Far happier to face an ideal which never can be realized than to face a reality which requires a self-examination now. It is more comforting to pursue a way of life that lays down all the patterns, rules, and customs by which to live, than to have to call into question the very motives which underlie our behavior. It is not easy to be faced with questions of ultimate concern when they confront us with the fact of an inevitable death which will wrench us from the treasures we have industriously collected for ourselves. And it is extremely trying to have to place our faith in anyone outside ourselves, for this makes us vulnerable and dependent, naked and defenseless.

Therefore we both seek and repudiate this man Jesus. Just because He knows the nature of our spiritual sickness we desire Him; just because He knows it better even than we do, we dread Him as well. No other sage has threatened the security of Self as Jesus has done. The way to salvation *is* the Self for Vedanta. The good part of the self—The Mind—is indestructible according to Socrates: Through the proper use of reason men come to a remembrance of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and are thereby enabled to participate in Reality once more. But Jesus requires us to risk the loss of all that we would have and are in order to find Reality. "For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it."<sup>12</sup> How do we ever know before we take that risk, that He can actually give us eternal life? What assurance have we that there will be anything left of us if we sacrifice every shred of selfhood, of self-respect, of the "I" which at least we can claim as our very own? No one can take our last bit of pride from us, and here is Christ demanding that we give it up to God right now.

Naturally we strike back at Him. Quite normally we reject Him at this point. He can have everything but this, and this he must not require of us. But because we know that He is right, that He has conquered us already, that He sees through our masks and bids us face the truth about ourselves, we are filled with a sense of guilt. This guilt demands a victim, and that victim is Christ: not just once on Calvary, but countless times in the hearts of all of us. We all destroy Him as the victim of our guilt, and in destroying Him we destroy the best that lies within ourselves. In killing Him we kill the hopes and dreams of all that we might be. We repudiate our best possibilities. In asserting the autonomy of our wills we destroy the possibility of our spiritual freedom. We reject—we disclaim—what we know to be our true destiny.

Having longed for communion with God we have been brought to the crisis of self-awareness by which Christ would save us from ourselves. In striking back against God we have cut off the only path that could have led us to reunion with Him. The effect of this is the destruction of the last shred of personal respectability, for we crucify not only Jesus but the only possibility of true selfhood as well. Therefore nothing is left us in the realm of spirit. Existence has now become a hopeless Nothingness.

The Cross is not only an event in history (though certainly it is not less than this), but it is repeated in climactic fashion in every human situation when men come face to face with the ultimate problem of Self. To kill Jesus is to remove the one who shows the true way to salvation. Why is He the true and only way? Because He alone brings us to the place where the final decision must be made—the very center of the self; because we know that He is right about us; because rejection of His teachings entails the end of hope. Yet, knowing this, we reject Him and repudiate the only chance of life. And this we do because the one thing left to us as persons, the essence of our individuality, is threatened by His relentless demands.

But why should His death be necessary? Why must He become our victim? Perhaps it is because men have to give vent to their anxiety. Perhaps it is because man seeks to destroy his guilt by burning it out in this way. Perhaps it is because the last possibility of man's puny effort to save himself by his own pride and respectability must be removed from him. Perhaps it is because the very thing that distinguishes man from other creatures must assert its autonomy to the very end. At any rate, men act out the Crucifixion in their individual lives as they wrestle with God in defense of their self-respect.

The issue of ultimate life or death lies here, then. Can we destroy all meaning in our very effort to preserve one last shred of selfhood, or can we not. The answer to this depends upon our answer to the question which is one of faith alone: Has Christ risen—is He Lord?

When everything is lost—all meaning in nature, human existence, and self—we are confronted with the ultimate question of life and death. Here we have but one of two choices, nothing more. Either the final meaning of life is Nothingness, or the meaning of life is Christ. There is no other alternative to these. For the clue to human existence lies either in this historical figure who forced man to come to total self-awareness, or there is no real meaning in human existence. If we repudiate Him we reject the possibility of salvation from self-destruction and self-denial, and thereby we become trapped in a totally hopeless situation. Anxiety becomes absolute.

What is the alternative to this absolute self-denial? It is the new life into which Christ leads those who respond to Him in faith. Those who can let go even of the self-respectability of nihilism



(wherein with one last gasp men assert their right to proclaim that there is no meaning in life), find in Him the life they vainly sought within themselves. The answer to the problem of true life thus lies at the center of the self and its ultimate loyalty. The seal of this faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ after His death on the Cross.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Matthew 15:17-20.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew 7:28.

<sup>3</sup>T. Reik, *Myth and Guilt, the Crime and Punishment of Mankind*, New York, Braziller, 1957, p. 199.

<sup>4</sup>P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, Chicago, 1951, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup>G. Marcel, *Being and Having*, Boston, 1951; *The Mystery of Being*, Vol. I, London, 1950, Ch. III.

<sup>6</sup>Luke 12:16-21; 15:11-32; 18:1-14.

<sup>7</sup>Matthew 5:27.

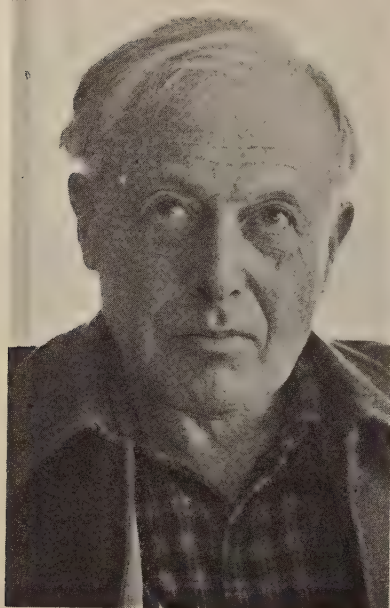
<sup>8</sup>Luke 12:1-3.

<sup>9</sup>Matthew 6:19-21.

<sup>10</sup>See Luke 8:43-8; 8:40-2, 49-56; 7:1-10.

<sup>11</sup>"But, wretched youth that I was—supremely wretched even in the very outset of my youth—I had entreated chastity of thee and had prayed, 'Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet.' For I was afraid lest thou shouldst hear me too soon, and too soon cure me of my disease of lust which I desired to have satisfied rather than extinguished" (Augustine, *Confessions*, VIII, vii, 17, Philadelphia and London, 1955).

<sup>12</sup>Luke 9:24.



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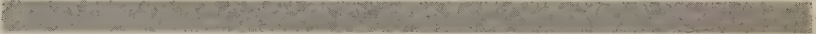


Ford Lewis Battles

# THE GENERATIONS OF THE FAITH

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, has had a long and distinguished career as philosopher and writer in Europe and America. Best known among his English-language books are *Out of Revolution*, and *The Christian Future*; but beyond his English titles there is an impressive array of works in German. "The Generations of the Faith" was presented as a paper at Hartford Seminary Foundation on the occasion of the publication by Westminster Press of *Calvin; Institutes of the Christian Religion* as translated by Ford Lewis Battles, Philip Schaff Professor of Church History at Hartford Seminary Foundation.



"He was a man of battle and of creative genius, a man who could tear apart and could build up, a man endowed with as vigorous an intellect, as lofty a conscience and, above all, as high a courage as the human race has ever produced."

This has been said of Jean Calvin by a modern unbeliever, by a humanist. It is sheer nonsense, for the human race never produces anything. Quite the contrary, *cette race maudite* of Adam is itself a miserable product of the earth unless God recreates its members into stars in his sky. In this sense Calvin's first biographer, Theodor Beza, answered the question why we should read his book on John Calvin: because we should deserve to be plunged back into Egyptian darkness, if we ceased to look up to the stars which have led us out of it. Not as a product of race or earth, but as a star in the sky, as one witness in the cloud of witnesses, let Jean Calvin speak here today to us from his translation of our faith, as it dominated the Western World from 1536 to 1564, and let us speak of its retranslation among us in our own times by the effort of our friend

Battles whom we salute today. For if this book comes to life, its author springs to life. More than most books and men, Calvin and the author of the 'Institutes' are one. A man of slime and clay is transformed into a star of history by becoming voice; in this manner his voice and his sufferings become a word of God for one time: each generation needs such a voice or choir of voices in God's economy of salvation. We could know this ourselves. But from our scientific cleverness we often suppress our own experiences. Must not fathers speak to their sons of their encounter with God? The book of Genesis was written out of such experience in the writers' own generations. Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, these four generations had become vocal in a grandiose, painful quartet of voices. They stand before us to this day. So overwhelming was this revelation to the contemporaries that the whole Bible took the same shape. From his heart, the author of Genesis knew how God creates and so he wrote the creation story from experience: in six toledoth, six generations, the heavens and the earth also were created by God's Word. Biblical criticism has ignored these empirical origins of the Pentateuch.<sup>1</sup> But how could I otherwise speak of "the twentieth century" instead of myriads of seconds? Calvin himself tells us the same truth. He wrote: "rightly does king David put the times of his youth into the plural. For, without God, there only are incoherent moments of time." I remain ephemeral as long as I babble myself. The little devils sell me short. Only God's commands can create units of time, id est, epochs, ages, generations, centuries, eras. As you know in the Bible, 'eternity' is not timelessness, but is literally, the recurrence of epochs.<sup>2</sup> God creates the epochs by our obedience. Calvin thunders: "La première règle c'est que nous aions la bouche close et qu'il n'ait que lui qui parle et que nous ouvrons les oreilles pour écouter. Nous ne sommes que ses organes et ses instruments." Only God's word creates that which we may call our times, our epoch, our age, our century. When we let God speak and listen and behave as his tools and instruments, only then can the times coalesce. "Dieu seul règne et tout le monde soit assujettie à lui; brief qu'il ni ait que sa parole, qui ait toute audience, sans que personne y ajoute un seul mot." (69, 446) God alone is king and the whole world is sub-

<sup>1</sup>Only Benno Jacob (1934) clearly stated the true relation of "Samuel" and "Kings" to the books of Moses in his masterful commentary to "Genesis."

<sup>2</sup>The liturgical phrase "world without end" is a totally unwarranted mistranslation. Vide my *Soziologie II, Die Vollzahl der Zeiten* 1958 S. 384ff.



jected to him, in short, nothing but God's word should be heard, without anybody adding one single word. Through Jean Calvin's subjection, the word of God was king for one generation: it reigned for the second day of the Protestant Reformation in the form and shape of the 'Institutes' of Calvin's personal piety, humbly generalized by him into 'Institutes of the Christian Religion'. Every generation is a word of God, a line of God's great chant and Calvin is the pentameter as Luther is the hexameter in the distich of the Reform. Because Calvin was the second line in God's couplet of the Reformation his book for the king of France was a task like that of St. Luke when he dedicated his book to his Excellency the Lord Theophilus. Luther had been the great occasionalist, the speaker and writer of the *kairos*, of the appointed hour. Luther is a journeyman of the Spirit. Luther came forward with his 95 theses because the salesman of indulgences passed his house in Wittenberg bodily and presently. And Luther remained the man of the hour, of the inspired moment, of the table talks. Aye, did he not boast that the great light of 'sola fide', by faith alone, from Habakuk II, had flashed through his mind "auf dem Gang," i.e. in the bathroom? Calvin was required to condense Luther's daily beads of faith into the rosary of his one book. In moving terms, Jean Calvin has bowed to the miracles of God's timing so that Luther's experience of this free and open and surprising economy of salvation was enshrined in the system of Calvin's 'Institutes'. His humility in this respect places his textbook outside the range of all the other academic or scholastic textbooks. Calvin, most successful systematizer, preacher, textbook writer, reverently placed his own skills in the second line of the couplet, in the second generation of the reformed faith. For he humbly wrote: "not the routines of preaching convert. God's ordinary economy and dispensation by which he calls his own children follow no unvarying rule. He may use other ways. Certainly God has used many another way of giving a man true knowledge of his maker by inward means, that is by some illumination of the Spirit apart from the medium of preaching." In these lines the teacher and unexcelled systematizer, Jean Calvin, voluntarily has taken second seat in the economy of salvation, just as Paul did when he, the greatest of teachers, cried out "Scio cui credidi." I know to whom I have given my heart. The child Jesus was not a prophet, not a teacher or rabbi. For this reason, after Christ,

all we professional people have to be given the slip time and again lest God become predictable. We shall not come to the end of this memorial hour before recognising that Calvin's notorious doctrine of predestination represents a parallel reverence before the economy of faith, parallel to the one of which you have just heard here in his refusal of accepting any foreknowable monopoly for preaching or teaching. Mostly the interplay of the successive generations of the spirit is glossed over, as it is glossed over for Peter and Mark, Paul and Luke, the Aramaic and the Greek Matthew. Luther and Calvin are lumped together as the reformers, or we hear that Calvin came a little later than Luther, and it is true that the 'Institutes' were written nineteen years after the 95 theses. Figured mechanically, 'nineteen times one' is not impressive. But it is as with Hegel and Marx. Only 17 years separated Hegel's climax and Marx's Communist Manifesto. Nevertheless Marx lived a whole epoch apart from Hegel. Calvin was separated from Luther and Melancthon not by nineteen years but by an abyss. The abyss between Hegel and Marx obviously was the proletarian disillusion with the bourgeois ideas, a disillusion of which Hegel had no inkling but which visited Marx. The abyss between Luther and Melancthon on the one side and Calvin on the other, was opened in the peasants' war of 1525 and the anabaptist movements, reaching its depth in the New Jerusalem of the anabaptists of Münster in 1535. Please, present to your mind this fact: Calvin began to think, to formulate, to write after the potential abuses and limitations of the Reformation herself shone forth. Not from an in itself meaningless external chronology should we call him the authoritative voice of the second generation. Alas, the humanists think of man's generations in astronomical terms. But in God's economy of history a second generation is required as soon as the utmost, the extreme consequences of the first generation's novelty in action may be assessed. In this sense, for example, Chief Justice John Marshall embodied the second generation for the Common Law in the new United States. In this same sense, Calvin is not free—as Luther had been—to speak out regardless of ranters, of antinomians, of anabaptists and all the proud doctrinarians of the Reformation. Calvin has become the man, the voice, the power of this second generation. As a Lutheran who later became a deacon in the French Reformed Church in Frankfurt and who in the U. S. worships in the Congregational

Church for a generation, I had much cause to ponder over the dialectics between Luther and Calvin, and I deem it one of the open desiderata of our Sunday school instruction that this dialectics be used for edification. For, it reveals a perpetual crux of our faith. Our faith is meaningless unless it receives its doctrine from history. The Bible history is the source for our teaching. Calvin lived immersed in this necessity. And in as far as he did, his book itself in a measure has reached the stature of an inspired creature. This cherub of the Reformation did not dish out classroom generalities. He voiced an emergency in history; hence it should not be labelled 'Institutes of Christian Religion', it is Calvin's account of his own piety. Here, however, we come to the limitations of the man's self-understanding. He did not know and he did not wish to know that his was a place in history. He made himself smaller than he was. He introduced his book with this misleading sentence: "However the knowledge of God and of ourselves may be mutually connected, the order of right teaching requires that we discuss the knowledge of God first, then proceed afterwards to treat the latter." This is the wrong order. It vitiates the whole book, and, by the way, all theology, as it cannot help generalizing God into the God of Aristotle, far away from myself. Soon we shall have to explain Calvin's famous and frightening chapters on predestination as the result of his kowtowing to our inherited and unbiblical order of teaching. They still dare to teach among us the divine mysteries per se, abstracted from your and mine and Adam's and Eve's and John's and Joseph's and Mary's and Luther's and Calvin's encounters with God. But outside these encounters we may know nothing of God. Because Calvin seems to omit them purposely he has to be supplemented today. Fortunately the real fact is that he was bound by history. Calvin was called forth by the historical crisis into which the Reformation had driven. By now you may be more willing to listen to my request of today that we should celebrate Calvin himself as a translator. In your mind the translation of our friend Battles may seem the translation of an original work, the 'Institutes' by John Calvin.

I defy you on this. Today's celebration would not be more than sentimentality unless we trace the history of the spirit as a sequence of translations. Yes, today we do celebrate the *re*-translation of Calvin's celebrated opus magnum. But this man's written word

binds together thirty years, one whole generation's Christian life. As God created the generations of heaven and earth in six generations and then he created man, he further created us as generations and he requested us to leave our name, our word of faith on our own time, and from the Bible we may know that under the name above all names every epoch, every generation translates God's word and for doing so comes under the judgment and the name calling and the roll call of our creator. While Luther was aging and bodily failing young Calvin already grew into the name-giver of the second generation by translating Luther's genius into lasting doctrine, a veritable Luke of a veritable Paul. But if this be so, then all spiritual life must be seen as translation. And although we still may distinguish translations of the first and the second degree, it is more urgent to consider both, the "institutiones" of 1560 and the "institutes" of 1960 as translations. Could it be that any future doctrine of the Holy Spirit may have to start with the mystery that we all are required to translate, from the days of Adam to the last judgment? Instead of talking of originals and their translations, it is high time to treat the so called originals as attempts to translate. Calvin's was the task to retranslate. For the Holy Spirit is the translator from eon to eon.

Hence the 'Institutes' had to draw the line against all overcleverness and overconclusiveness, against all pure reason. He who translates, remains immersed in the water of faith. Innumerable were Calvin's refusals to think for the fun of thinking. The modern mentality of the quizkid he abhorred and, to appreciate his chastity, please face up to the brutal truth that nothing is destroying the mind in this country so wantonly as the right claimed by every unwashed mouth to spit out questions as irreverently as cherry-stones. Children and students are fed on curiosity which in itself is just a worthless itch. Certainly this has not been John Calvin's vice. It is difficult to convey his eloquent silences, his reticence. However, when Faustus Socinus pestered him with questions, Calvin wrote, in 1549: "If you wish to know more, ask someone else. For you shall never succeed in your quest of making me from eagerness to serve you, transgress the boundaries placed on our knowledge by the Lord (XIII, 485)." More than once has his greatest experience remained shrouded in silence, as in his decisions of leaving France, fleeing to Strassbourg, returning to Geneva. A great man of Cal-



vin's stature and suffering has described these secrets of the soul's trembling as Calvin has trembled innumerable times. "When horror gripped him despite his longing to do God's will, then something happened which gave him the one thing yet lacking: the decisive shove, compulsion. That eased the strain. On this miracle, mostly, man remains silent, although perhaps we all may taste it once. But it violates our pride. Man seeks his honour in his free act. However in the midst of the act a moment occurs in which man's courage is deficient simply because he has invested all his courage in the act. Unless at this point the shove of constraint is added and helps the act to be born, it never would see the light of day. But this compulsion arrives. Man has an inborn right to be donated with this compulsion, a right which God acknowledges. All prayer ultimately is a prayer to see one's own free will alleviated by this compulsion. All thanksgiving gives thanks for just this. But the shame which surrounds all prayer is caused by this mysterious interplay of our free choice and God's decisive shove." (Franz Rosenzweig, *Jehuda Halevy*, 2 ed., 1929, on the poem "Zwang")

It is wise to remember the profound reticence around this mystery of Calvin's own prayers when reading the 'Institutes'. The book and its author have been much abused because of the doctrine called 'horrible' by Calvin himself, the doctrine of predestination. I am stressing the reticence because I hope that you may do justice to Calvin's passion for this doctrine with the help of a few tools which I shall try to offer you now: Calvin knew that a book like the 'Institutes' represented only a second voyage; a transformation of tales told, of prayers, and of commands, into teachable abstractions. How small was the weight of such abstract syllogisms in comparison to his daily sorrows and conflicts and perils? How often did he have to enter into the agony of solitude, of powerless ignorance which is the fountainhead of any fully personal prayer, of any encounter of a man's unique soul with the creator, in Calvin's term 'for our election'. In prayer we have to learn that God is not called Almighty because he created the sun and the heavens and the earth. He is almighty because he can conquer all the mighty powers of sloth, cowardice, routine, vanity, pride, tradition, law encroaching on my freedom at this very moment. God is almighty not for his horsepowers but for his triumph over all powers in our tiny frightened heart; This very different almightiness was Calvin's central

experience. Hence he knew before becoming a professor that which some professors of theology now apparently will have to learn long after they have studied theology, that the language of prayer is and shall remain the soul's first and fundamental key board of speech: the intonations of dread and desire, of endearment and of exorcism, of repulsion and attraction are a linguistic reality. The subjunctives of the passionate heart are more important and more real than the figures of mathematics and the facts of physics. Our school children all learn the wrong logic. For a complete logic would be the whole life of the logos, of God's dialogue with us, about our many ways through his one creation. That which the schools call logic is a ridiculous rudiment. It is a fourth quarter of God's fullness of speech. Does not the logic taught in the schools of the occident only mention the phrases of the indicative? ' $2+2=4$ '. 'The earth is round'. But the first quadrant of the universe of discourse consists of imperatives. Even prayer is preceded by commands given and obeyed: come, go, get up, go to bed, look in your heart and write, *tolle lege*, emigrate, become a doctor, *taisez-vous!* Calvin never tired of commanding silence. God compels in his presence that highest of all praise, silence. When Norway seceded from Sweden the great and very loquacious poet Björnsterne Björnson wired the new Prime Minister Michelsen "now we all must hang together." He received the reply: "Now let us keep our mouths shut." That is divine logic unknown in our textbooks of logic. Yet the validity of this divine logic is a condition of all worship or prayer. The third divine chapter of logic is that of piety, of grateful remembrance. We remember, we narrate, we tell the stories of God's mercies, of men's follies or of our heroes who embodied God's mercy. That means that, as command or prayer, the tales of history also precede mathematics or science. In his 'Institutes' Calvin uses the eloquent and untranslatable phrase '*meminerimus*'—'then we shall have to recall', when he feels that history must be safeguarded against scientific logic. And here you see Calvin's dilemma. Writing after the orgies of the ranters he had to step forward into the field of teaching. Teaching exists only with regard to prehistoric man. And I mean pre-historic. The newcomers, the next generation, the laity, the people, the children by teaching are to be recruited for the army of God's fighters. Teaching has to be logical in the diminished sense of mere logic because the laity is prehistoric, the stu-

dents are this side of experienced law giving, experienced passion, experienced history, id est, of the fullness of the logos of God. Because you, dear listeners, expect me to translate the logos of God's commands to Calvin, of Calvin's passionate prayers, the logic of his painful 'life history' into the prehistoric logic of this classroom, after all I too have to speak here in the indicative of timeless reasoning, of abstract truth, of  $2+2=4$ . In real life  $2+2$  never equals 4. Because we have to make sacrifices for each other not the slightest life process can even start, unless the sentence,  $2+2=4$  is thrown out of the window.

And now you will be able to do justice to Calvin's task in his 'Institutes'. Our students learn that Calvin lived from 1509-1564, that he reformed the church of Geneva, that his book still is read and now is retranslated by Ford Lewis Battles. They, under the pressure of our world of mechanics, place this with all their other facts. Even the weather they treat as a merely objective fact. Where I am free to shout "What a beautiful day!" "What a horrible season!" they would like to limit themselves to meteorology and repeat the indifferent indicatives of the weather man 'It is zero weather'. How can Calvin teach these dead souls? How can you speak to these dreadful brats and quizkids who expect to be stimulated, who talk back at random, who base their pride on their I.Q.s? This was Calvin's dilemma as it is ours. And there, to me, lies the explanation of his doctrine of predestination. Often, in his book, he may seem to drag it in like a red herring and the mild Philippus Melancthon, this teacher by nature, omitted the whole doctrine. But Calvin was, as we have seen, a teacher by super-nature, by history, by God's call, to embody in a book of instruction the living experiences of the years 1517 to 1536. By predestination Calvin projects the three other quarters of logic, of command, of desire, of telltale into the fourth quarter of the philosopher's logic. For Calvin in all his cruel manner of letting God give his decrees in unending freedom at least abolished the abstract, timeless laws which we deduce. Predestination restored the hidden, the miraculous, the lifeblood of reality, the trust in God to the world of braintrusters. And their world Calvin dreaded. He dreaded students who would never learn to tremble as he trembled when Farel cursed him, invoking God's presence, unless Calvin became the Reformer of the unruly Canton of Geneva. Calvin wrote for our modern students in the abstract

academic style of the indicative: 'God is such and such. His church is this and this. His sacraments mean this and this'. But he wanted these poor minds of the mere indicative to learn of the true God who blesses and curses, who decrees and demands. And how could he translate into a textbook the styles of God and the soul, the language of commands and the language of prayer? His way out was the double predestination. Impassionately he translated the presence of God into the abstract doctrine of his ever inscrutable sovereignty. Predestination projects prayer and obedience, desire and compulsion into the logic of facts. It is a grandiose transposition from the key of faith and communion into the key of reason. I submit that the doctrine of predestination is a heroic effort of translating man's temporality and so-to-speak non-existence and God's eternal existence into the purely spatial concepts of reason. Loyal to Luther's primacy of faith and cautioned by the Anabaptists' frenzies to teach orderly and rationally, he undertook to place God's unending incalculability into the midst of human reasoning. Let us recognize this doctrine of eternal damnation as his attempt to keep the way open for God's presence, as his replacing the insolent descriptions of a ridiculous 'God in general' of the philosophers by the only valid form of speaking of God by invoking him in fear as being my God, our God in this very moment, of our being here before Him. For this unacademic trustiness Calvin may strike us as a lunatic. And in fact, when I told an otherwise intelligent humanist, age 75, that I would have to speak here on Calvin, his send off was: "but he was a lunatic!" Well, to this gentleman Thou, O God, art "an object of praise!"<sup>3</sup>

The style of the indicative and of humanism and of logic is unable to transform our minds from their sinful state into one of a new revelation. Logic cannot repent. Calvin's doctrine of predestination attacks logic in its innermost den of  $2+2=4$ . For God may say: your  $2+2$  do not equal 4. To my own old congregation in Frankfurt, Calvin wrote this on March 3rd, 1556: "Vous scavez la règle que nous donne le S. Esprit pour nous réconcilier, c'est que chacun cède et quitte son droit." The first thing God says is: "2 rights and 2 properties do not equal 4, for your rights and properties are wrongs in my eyes." Calvin is the great translator of God's

<sup>3</sup>More on this lunacy of the gentlemen in the chapter 'vivit Deus' of "Das Geheimnis der Universität," Stuttgart 1958.



freedom and of the soul's faith in God's free new action, the two treasures of the Reformation. Calvin translated them into the doctrinal sobriety of the second generation. Listen to these words in the pithy English of F. L. Battles: "Human curiosity renders the discussion of predestination, already somewhat difficult of itself, very confusing and even dangerous. No restraints can hold it back from wandering in forbidden bypaths and thrusting upward to the heights. If allowed it will leave no secret to God that it will not search out and unravel. Since we see so many on all sides rushing into this audacity and impudence, among them certain men not otherwise bad, they should in due season be reminded of the measure of their duty in this regard.

"First then, let them remember that when they inquire into predestination, they are penetrating the sacred precincts of divine wisdom. If anyone with carefree assurance breaks into this place, he will not succeed in satisfying his curiosity and he will enter a labyrinth from which he can find no exit. For it is not right for man unrestrainedly to search out things that the Lord has willed to be hid in himself, and to unfold from eternity itself the sublimest wisdom which he would have us revere but not understand that through this also he should fill us with wonder. He has set forth by his Word the secrets of his will that he has decided to reveal to us. These he decided to reveal so far as he foresaw that they would concern us and benefit us.

" 'We have entered the pathway of faith,' says Augustine, 'let us hold steadfastly to it. It leads us to the King's chamber, in which are hid all treasures of knowledge and wisdom. For the Lord Christ himself did not bear grudge against his great and most select disciples when he said: "I have . . . many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." (John 16, 12) We must walk, we must advance, we must grow, that our hearts may be capable of those things which we cannot yet grasp. But if the last day finds us advancing, there we shall learn what we could not learn here'. If this thought prevails with us that the word of the Lord is the sole way that can lead us in our search for all that it is lawful to hold concerning him, and is the sole light to illumine our vision of all that we should see of him, it will readily keep and restrain us from all rashness, For we shall know that the moment we exceed the bounds of the word, our course is outside the pathway and in darkness, and that there we

must repeatedly wander, slip and stumble. Let this, therefore, first of all be before our eyes: to seek any other knowledge of predestination than what the Word of God discloses is not less insane than if one should purpose to walk in a pathless waste (cf. Job 12:24), or to seek in darkness. And let us not be ashamed to be ignorant of something in this matter, wherein there is a certain learned ignorance. Rather let us willingly refrain from inquiring into a kind of knowledge, the ardent desire for which is both foolish and dangerous, nay, even deadly. But if a wanton curiosity agitates us, we shall always do well to oppose to it this restraining thought: just as too much honey is not good, so for the curious the investigation of glory is not turned into glory (Prov. 25:27. cf. Vg.). For there is good reason for us to be deterred from this insolence which can only plunge us into ruin.

"There are others who, wishing to cure this evil, all but require that every mention of predestination be buried; indeed they teach us to avoid any question of it, as we would a reef. Even though their moderation in this matter is rightly to be praised, because they feel that these mysteries ought to be discussed with great soberness, yet because they descend to too low a level, they make little progress with the human understanding, which does not allow itself to be easily restrained. Therefore, to hold to a proper limit in this regard also, we shall have to turn back to the Word of the Lord, in which we have a sure rule for the understanding. For Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which, as nothing is omitted that is both necessary and useful to know, so nothing is taught but what is expedient to know. Therefore we must guard against depriving believers of anything disclosed about predestination in Scripture, lest we seem either wickedly to defraud them of the blessing of their God or to accuse and scoff at the Holy Spirit for having published what it is in any way profitable to suppress."

Jean Calvin has redeemed theology from Aristotle by holding on, in the midst of the clutter of mere concepts, to God's living and abhorrent mystery.

Let us then celebrate Mr. Battles' translation and Mr. McNeill's edition by placing Calvin himself among the translators. His 'Institutes' have transposed, transported, transferred the treasures of the liturgy, of baptism and communion, into the impossible language of reason by way of this doctrine that God remains free to go on

creating new times, new people, a true creatio ex nihilo, in every generation and that his children who fall silent before him, may be called to do his creative will for one more generation. Always must the world of man perish, if we do not generate our generation, the next generation of His word. Always the end of our hectic times is upon us. A generation is a creature to be created by our obedience to the true new and next command of creation. History is the chain of translations of God's word in an unceasing stream of generations 'assujetties sous sa parole', listening to his command instead of speaking insolently out of their own will and arbitrariness and opening their own mouth as a mob may open it for empty shouts, usually thereby murdering Cinna the poet.

Your own translation, friends, is ennobled by this brotherhood of faithful translators, by your brother Calvin's pious translation. In a few examples let me point out, how your new edition participates in the common effort of our own generation.

We find it unpalatable to peddle Calvin's abstract doctrine of eternal damnation. I at least do. But I can afford to do this, because my generation looks through the arrogance of the academic style and the allegedly infallible scientific language. Only children, mathematicians, and semanticists believe today that an indicative is wiser than an imperative or a song. God is not a topic for conversation in his absence. He listens in even when students of divinity dare discuss him as a concept as though he did not harken. The tri-unity of the commanding, the beloved and the recognisable God is irreducible to any 'Institutes of Christian Religion'. We therefore can do without the doctrine of double predestination as soon as we refrain from the lunacy of translating God's overpowering presence into conceptual indifference. Your new translation is protected by this saving grace of our times. Many of you may know, how Karl Barth mutinied from his own Calvinistic background in this question of predestination.

Your new translation, instinctively, contains a parallel to Barth's conversion. I find that your new edition at innumerable places is translating the term, 'God's counsel', dei consilium, by the word 'plan'. To Calvin himself, however, 'plan' was to be expressed by 'machination'! And your own translation also uses 'plan' at times for this rather contemptuous term. In most cases, however, your 'plan' translates Calvin's 'consilium'. Is plan counsel? Is consilium

plan? Plan did not exist in 1556. The term 'plan' is of revolutionary origin. Since the world wars and since the Russian revolution, plan widely differs from counsel. By "economic planning" a consistency is emphasized which in Calvin was not suggested by the word, 'consilium'. "Consilium" points to a here and now deliberation, intention, conclusion; its accent is on the present. It may, of course, affect past and future, but the ictus is on the present state of mind. In plan, the starting point is the last date envisaged. From 1969, for instance, a nine year plan would work backwards to 1961 and 1960.

Yet, my taking note of this change from counsel to plan is not a critique. The spirit of our times has inspired you. You have moved away from the liberal dogma of a heap of separated individual souls, elect or damned, each one of them faced by an inscrutable judge. Your translation as a living translation always must do, moves us on into a more complete understanding of God's providence. Karl Barth discovered that God's predestination received meaning only if the soul turned away from her splendid isolation. Barth asked: 'Who is the most predestined man?' The answer is with Paul in Romans: 'Jesus Christ our Lord.' In fact he is the only fully predestined man ever to appear between Adam and judgment day. The Godman Jesus being free, being beyond life and death, may recreate the patriarchs in limbo. Where is eternal damnation since Christ entered hell? Christians daily rewrite history, our belief in the triune God changes the whole picture of predestination as Christ is much more predestined than any lame, limited, lukewarm sinner's self. The gates of hell daily may set free another battalion of hitherto damned souls when our Lord descends.

In the word 'plan' this grandiose unity which Ephesians calls the economy of the fullness of all the times in the 'enanthroposis' of God, reenters our thinking from an unexpected angle. The present world revolution pushes the term into the foreground. I am reminded of the birth of the term 'homousios' in Niceaea. It was a Neoplatonist word and the philosophical emperor Constantine, not a Christian himself, used this non-scriptural term. Similarly 'plan' is a non-biblical term. The biblical term is economy. However we have lost this term. For the Latin Church and the theologians have translated economy by 'dispensation' and this term dispensation today is anemic. It became especially ambiguous as 'dispensation'



also means to dispense with, make allowance for an exception or to dispense paper-towels. Worse than this ambiguity of the latin term was the loss of continuity in the use of the genuine biblical word 'economy'. Christianity pays dearly today for this loss which is born out by your index: the term 'economy' is not in it. Yet the Church has been the first world economist as the letter to the Ephesians points out. Alas, we have ceded our most praiseworthy possession, God's economy of salvation, to Karl Marx. We have lost the true economy first by our pale substituting of 'dispensation' for it, and then dropping it altogether. Marx's economic and historical materialism originated from the same kind of heretical necessity with which our pentecostal sects plague us today. The pentecostal sects are indispensable in righteous punishment for our forgetting the third article on the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. Correspondingly marxism is an indispensable heresy. For no 'ecumenical movements' will save us, as they spring from the purely geographical vision. Christianity never moves in space but it conquers death through new joints in time. When the times are out of joint, Hamlet must put them right in his death. This economy of the generations of souls must supersede the economy of commodities. When life triumphs over death the standard of living may lapse. The economy of salvation alone can overcome the economy of secular revolution. Why do our theologians remain blind to their own loss of their best term? Our friend Battles' splendid indices do show that Calvin nowhere has quoted the locus of this term, the tenth verse of the first chapter of Ephesians. In part, this is remedied by Battles through his using the term 'plan' for consilia. For in God's plan Jesus Christ, the most predestined man of God, can never be omitted from any one single man's relation to the predestinating father of our Lord. By using the word 'plan' we are compelled to call into every occult counsel of God the comforting presence of the Name who is above all names. Your name, my despondent friends, is not to stand naked and mute against the Judge. You appear under the mighty name of your firstborn brother and King. My own lifework has centered around the parallel task to overcome the Toynbees, the van Loons, the Spenglers and the Gibbons by a true economy of salvation, a 'full count of the times'. Christ is the Lord of the eons, according to the ancient word: 'si creatura Dei, merito et dispensatio Dei sumus.' (Paulus Orosius II, 1, 4) Since we are God's

creation, we deserve to consider ourselves part of his plan. Thank you, translator Calvin, for your liberality in this use of the word 'plan'. You have moved one step onward to the times when Christ becomes transparently all in all and may submit all nations and all the eons which are embodied in the nations, to the father. For the purpose of this submission Christ lends every nation and every soul her unending freedom to advance, to break the prison and the spell of diabolical isolation.

I have jotted down many other sentences in your translation which have made me jump. For instance 'trencherman' for 'comes-tor' is such a felicitous term. Another example: you ask us to 'mount up' to God, your realism made me marvel. Calvin rests fully assured that we at all times may change our level which, for an allegedly rigid predestinarian, presupposes a remarkable faculty of free will. We are, after all, capable of being elevated beyond our own system. I should think that a concordance of this single topic might give us a very important help in our strange sea of troubles which a witty Frenchman has well described: 'L'erreur en cette manière est de verser dans l'esprit des systèmes alors même qu'on veut y échapper.' The error in this matter makes us remain inside the mentality of systems even when we wish to escape from it (M. Delbrouille, *Chanson de Roland*, 1954, 166). But Calvin allows us at all times a spontaneous ascent to God whence to look down upon the systems of the Aristotelians and Platonists and the logical positivists who would like to have us feed exclusively on the dead quarter of God's full logos. We shall need that free ascent for our plight is enormous.

Our generation is not a first nor a second generation as that of Luther and of Calvin. It is a third generation after two world wars. For this reason it now lives in a third sterile time, in the cold war. In other words, three generations have remained torn, unformed, uninformed, inarticulate. We are three silenced generations and their fragments rightly are called 'angry', 'beatniks', 'lost'. This time, therefore, these three silenced generations will have to chant the word of God for our three generations together. I am reminded of the songs of old Tyrtaios. Tyrtaios made the three generations in Sparta, the old, the mature, the young, sing together. In today's ambient we have an encouraging symbol. By your loyalty and devotion and industry long distant times are bound again to our own

time and by your translating, you fortify us for our own overdue task. Our Reforming Word obviously has as its very theme the rift between the generations. Why are they paralyzed? Because they no longer seriously speak to each other. You, however, admonish us to coalesce with many more than three generations. The gospel generations and St. Augustine and Luther and Calvin coalesce. God's bliss is on those who make his 'Holy, Holy, Holy' ring in such a manner that all the ages seem to become One more and more. This is the promised fullness of the times, the remedy in the economy of salvation. Hence it is my privilege to call this day, in thankfulness to God and you, a true holiday.




Peter L. Berger



# NOTE ON SOCIOLOGY AND HOMILETICS

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In a previous article in this publication the point was made that sociology could do most for theological education by remaining itself, that is by remaining an empirical and value-free discipline, which in turn would enter into dialogue with other disciplines represented in the curriculum. An experiment along these lines was conducted within the curriculum of the Hartford Theological Seminary in the spring semester of 1960. It took the form of a homiletic-sociological seminar jointly offered by Professor Chalmers Coe, of the Department of Pastoral Theology, and the present writer. The seminar was somewhat awkwardly entitled "Preaching and Social Issues." Not surprisingly some of the students registering for it expected the seminar to deal with the way in which preachers ought to talk to social problems. They found that the central social problem analyzed was preaching itself. If successful theological education consists in repeating the experience of Augustine expressed in a sentence of the *Confessions*—"I myself became a problem unto myself"—then this little experiment in interdisciplinary dialogue can be termed a success.

The seminar deliberately stayed clear of the "how to" aspect of homiletics. The procedure was simple. Sermons were read in class, some of them taken from literature, the majority written by the students in the seminar. These sermons were then subjected to a detailed theological critique by Professor Coe and a sociological

analysis by the writer. This note must limit itself to a few observations about the kind of sociological analysis possible in such a venture.

The most obvious sociological comments can be made about the social context of the sermon. The student sermons included such contexts as a 4th of July celebration, a community in which a strike is taking place, or a chaplain addressing a prison congregation. Different sociological questions are posed by these instances. For example, the minister speaking at a patriotic ceremony must ask himself whether he can do anything except carry out the function that sociologists would call "legitimation"—that is, solemnly sanctifying whatever secular purpose is served by the ceremony. The strike situation raises different questions. The minister who advocates harmony in such a situation must ask himself which side is most likely to benefit by such harmony. In other words, he must understand in what way a call for peace may help preserve the *status quo*. Such understanding is assisted by the sociological concept of "latent function"—that is, a function which is unintended or even unconscious. Sociological analysis in such a situation may sometimes lead to the conclusion that what seemed like non-partisan peace-making is actually intervention on the side of the stronger party in the conflict. The context of the prison chaplain raises the question of his relationship to the apparatus of coercion (what sociologists call "social control") under which his congregation lives. The chaplain must be conscious of the sociological implications of the fact that his salary comes from the same fund that pays for the prison walls, for the guns and (if such there is) for the electric chair. Is his activity simply a more humane side of the penal institution, keeping prisoners in line with words rather than with weapons? What is the chaplain's social role between the two opposing worlds of the captors and the captive? Needless to say, such questions also raise important theological issues. Sociological analysis, however, permits the consideration of these issues within a realistic perspective on the situation in which the minister carries out his activity.

Another area of analysis is the language and behavior of the preaching role itself. For instance, the sociologist is in a position to throw light on the class character of pulpit speech. This goes beyond the linguistic characteristics of the sermon, such as the em-



ployment of middle-class language in a non-middle-class context. In some cases the sociologist can point to the class location of the imagery, the canons of taste or even the gestures used by the preacher. The use of jokes, their content and the way in which they are likely to be interpreted by the audience would be cases of this.

This leads directly to the actual content of the sermon. It is here that the most distinctive contribution can probably be made by the sociologist. Among other techniques the sociologist here has at his disposal the approach commonly called "content analysis," which has been used most effectively in the study of political language. Most importantly the sociologist will raise the question as to what view of society is explicitly or implicitly presented by the sermon. Sometimes this analysis will have to make use of the concept of "ideology," meaning by this the systematic delusions concerning social reality that may be found in specific groups. An analysis of a prohibition sermon, undertaken in the course of the seminar, could serve as a textbook illustration of such ideological thinking—a consistent distortion of perspective manifest in almost every statement made about the nature of the social world. But less extreme cases can be equally illuminating—as the assumptions about the nature of the political process in election-day sermons or about the character of the economy in an address at a businessmen's retreat or about the conditions of urban life in a talk to inner-city workers.

It would be a misunderstanding to see the sociologist in such a venture as *advocatus diaboli*. More appropriately he is *advocatus mundi*. This world, however, is the arena in which the drama of preaching occurs. The sociologist reminds the preacher of this fact. Such mundane reminders are especially needful in a milieu of neo-orthodoxy, where young preachers sometimes have a little difficulty discriminating between kerygmatic authority and upper-middle-class pretentiousness.

